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The Masterpieces of La Fontaine.

NEW YORK
LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
FOURTH AVENUE AND 30TH STREET

The Masterpieces of
La Fontaine
DONE IN A VEIN OF PHRASING TERSE
FANCY INTO ENGLISH VERSE
by
PAUL HOOKHAM.
Illustrated by Margaret L. Hodgson.
With three full-page drawings by
Van Quiller Allon.
1916
OXFORD
B. H. Blackwell.
Broad Street.

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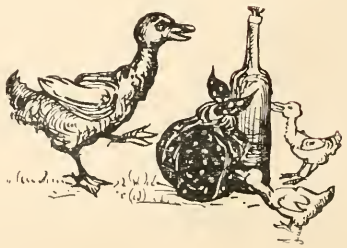
PAGE

e Wolf and the Fox 9
e Eagle and the Screech-owl 12
e Wallet 16
e Two Asses 20
e Wolf and the Dog 22
e Hare and the Tortoise 25
e Grasshopper and the Ant 27
e Man and the Adder 29
e Town Rat and the Country Rat 35
e Cat, the Weasel and the Young Rabbit 37
e Lion grown Old 41
ıth and the Woodman 42
ıth and the Unfortunate 43
e Oak and the Reed 45
e Wolf and the Lamb 47
e Ass and the Little Dog 49
e Drunkard and his Wife 52
e Lion and the Rat 54
e Sculptor and the Statue of Jupiter 55
e Lion vanquished by the Man 57
ve and Folly 59
e Cock and the Fox 61
e Heifer, the Goat, the Sheep and the Lion . . 63
e Fox and the Bust 65
e Middle-aged Man and his Two Admirers . . . 66
e Ruling Passion 68
e Cat and the Two Sparrows 70

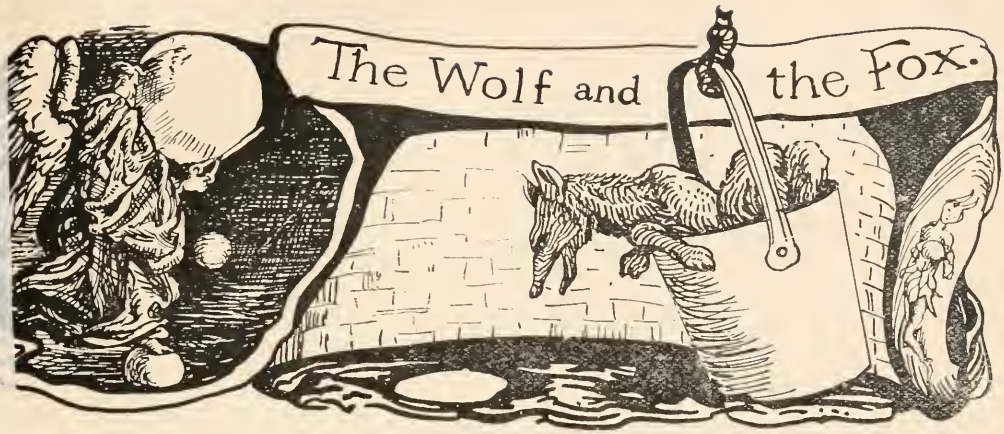
PAGE

The Bird-catcher, the Hawk and the Lark 73
The Tortoise and the Two Ducks 75
The Ass disguised as a Lion 77
The Cobbler and the Financier 79
The Old Man and the Three Young Men 82
The Satyr 86
The Rats in Council 89
The Fox who had lost his Brush 91
The Lion and the Ass Hunting 93
The Ape 96
The Two Doctors 97
The Sun and the Frogs 98
The Sick Lion and the Fox 101
The Heron 103
The Fox and the Stork 105
The Two Parrots, the King and his Son 108
Saying of Socrates 113
The Yeoman and his Heirs 114
Epilogue to "The Two Doves" 116
The Rat and the Elephant 119
The Fox, the Flies and the Hedgehog 121
The Two Bulls and the Frog 123
The Oyster and the Plaintiffs 125
The Miser and his Friend 127
The Taper 131
The Fox and the Turkeys 133
The Horse and the Ass 135
The Fox, the Wolf and the Horse 137
The Horse and the Wolf 140
The Wolf and the Stork 143
The Hound and her Friend 145
The Forest and the Woodman 147
The Elephant and the Ape of Jupiter 149



THIRTY-ONE of these Fables have already appeared in "Plays and Poems" and in "Echoes": their eption by the Press was almost embarrassingly favourable. e twenty-nine I now add are, I do not doubt, of considery greater merit than the former. Expert opinion therefore uld seem to justify some confidence in publishing the sent collection. I need scarcely add that I have envoured, now as always, to interpret the spirit rather n the letter of the original.

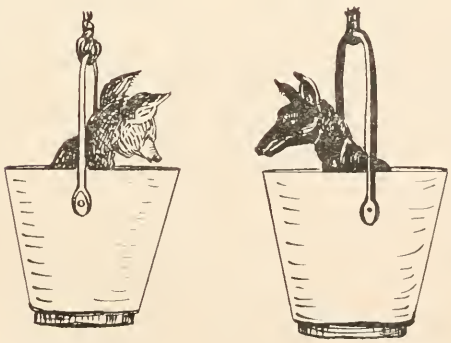
P. H.

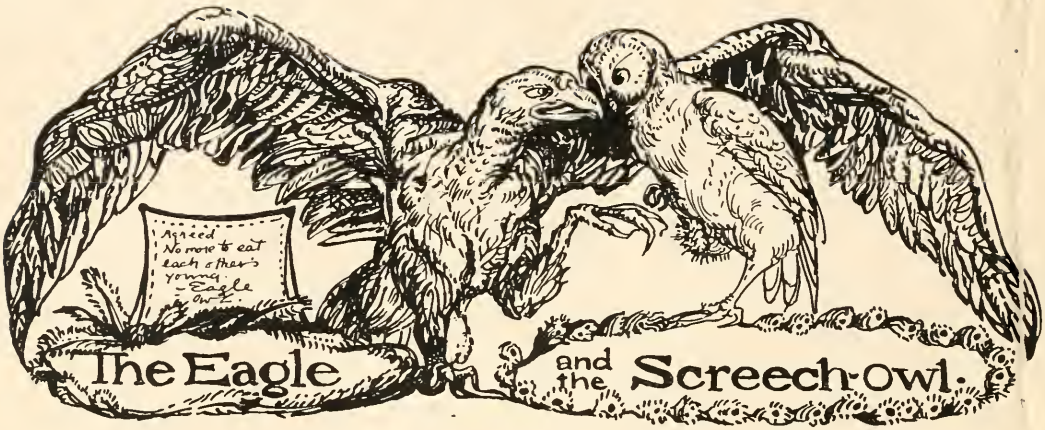


'TIS strange that Æsop thinks it orthodox
To give the palm for cunning to the Fox.
This seems to me an error, I confess.
The Wolf, when he must needs defend his life
Or 'gainst another's plot in deadly strife—
Does he not show as great an artfulness,
Or greater? On this point I can't help wondering
To find my good old Master blundering.
However, here's a case in which the palm
Rests with the Fox. One evening clear and calm
He saw the Moon's broad countenance
Reflected at the bottom of a Well,
And—strange to tell—
Mistook it for a goodly Cheese. One glance
Around revealed two Buckets: their descent
By turns drew up the liquid element.

Our Fox, enamoured of this savoury prize,
Resolves to pluck it
Out of the deep entrenchment where it lies,
And rashly leaps into the nearest Bucket
By which the other is suspended.
Behold the Animal descended!
Soon undeceived he contemplates with pain
His almost certain fate.
What chance has he of getting out again—
Unless some other Dupe with greed as great,
And flattered by the same
Illusion, draw him up the way he came
And in this dire dilemma take his place?
Two days elapsed without a soul appearing,
And Time, who never sleeps by day or night,
Had changed the Moon's round face,
Some fraction of her silver shearing.
Sir Reynard was in desperate plight.
At last to his immense relief he saw
Sir Wolf of hungry maw
Passing above him. "Comrade mine," cries h
"There's feasting here. This lovely Cheese y
God Faunus has with moulding hand caressed
And Io gave the milk from which he pressed i
A taste of it would sharpen quickly

The appetite of Jupiter though sickly.
I've had, as you perceive, a bite or two,
But still there's plenty left for me and you,
Which, if you care
To jump into that Bucket, we will share."
Although this story seems a little thin
The Wolf is fool enough to take it in.
He boards the Bucket as the Fox advises,
And as he sinks of course the other rises.



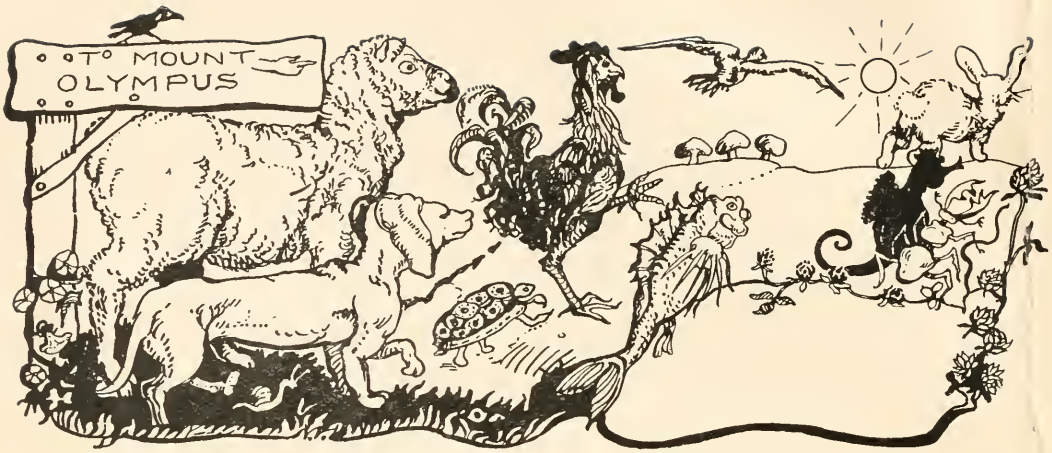


THE Eagle and the Screech-owl had effaced
Old quarrels, and in mutual love embraced.
They swore, on faith of King, on faith of Owl,
They never would incur the guilt
Of eating up each other's Young, nor prowl
About the places where their nests were built.
"My charming Children should you know, if seen?"
Inquired Minerva's Bird. "No," said the other.
"So much the worse," quoth he of mournful mien:
"If that is so, their Father and their Mother
May well have fears on their account;
A King's distinctions don't amount
To much when any prize is in his way;
Whatever people say,
In such a case, with Kings and Gods,

these can not be the children of my friend.

'Twixt fair and foul there's little odds.
Doomed are my Nurselings, vain a Parent's care,
If you're about not knowing who they are."
"Describe them more precisely then, or show them
To me," the Eagle said, "that I may know them.
To make the least mistake would be a pity."
"My Little Ones are singularly pretty,
Dainty, well formed, most graceful of all creatures:
You cannot fail to recognise these features;
For Heaven's sake don't forget; I am in terror
Lest they should perish through some fatal error."
It chanced that to the Owl a Brood was hatched;
And one fine evening as the Eagle watched
For prey, he happened to remark,
Within a crevice dark
Of natural rock, or in some niche
Of masonry (I really don't know which),
The little Monsters hideous enough,
With staring eyes, grim looks and voices rough.
"These cannot be the Children of my friend,"
Said he, "and as it's time for me to sup
I may with easy conscience eat them up."
Of all the Clutch he quickly makes an end.
The Owl returning finds the claws,
Sole relic of his Dears. He takes his cause,

With bitter plaints, before the Gods—demands
Vengeance upon the Brigand at their hands.
One of These answered : " Blame yourself alone
Or else the Law impelling everyone
To praise the Child of his begetting, blind
To all the imperfections of his Kind.
The Eagle asked you to describe
The features of your little Tribe ;
You drew a picture full of childish grace :
Had it of Truth the faintest trace ? "



The Wallet.

"LET all that breathes," said Jupiter one day,
"Before my Majesty appear.
If anyone has aught to say
In censure of himself or me,
As to his Fashioning, he need not fear
To make complaint, and any faultiness
In that respect shall have redress.
Come, Ape, speak first—for reasons good. You see
These Animals: now make comparison
Of all their several beauties with your own,
And say if you are satisfied." "Why not?"
Replied the Ape. "Like them I have four feet;
I've little cause to quarrel with my lot;

lame their
eighbours and
aud themselves.

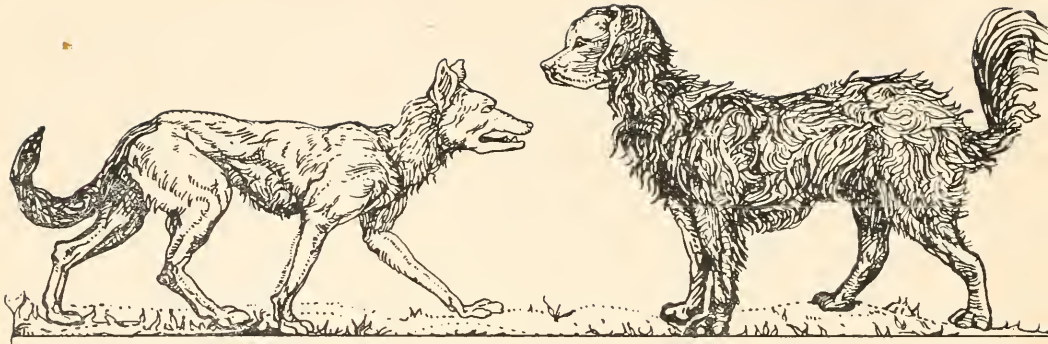
My figure surely is not framed so ill;
My Friend the Bear's indeed is less complete:
'Tis but a sketch of what might be expected
If he should ever come to be perfected,
Which, not to flatter him, he never will."
The Bear spoke next; they thought he would complain;
Not so: he praised himself in lofty strain,
But satirised the Elephant: he might,
According to the taste of Bears,
Have something more of Tail and less of Ears;
But as things were he was a painful sight.
The Elephant, though wise, on hearing this
The moral of it seemed to miss.
He likewise praised himself; but Madam Whale,
He said, was built on far too big a scale.
Dame Ant must now despise
The Mite as not approaching her in size.
Each on another some demerit shelves:
All blame their Neighbours and belaud themselves.
So Jupiter dismissed them. But of all
The Animals assembled, great or small,
The most ridiculous was Man.
For whatsoe'er our character or features,
Like Moles ourselves we scan,
Like Lynxes watch our Fellow-creatures;

Outside us we condemn each sin
And pardon everything within;
With different eyes we see ourselves and others,
Forgetting that we after all are Brothers.
A sort of mental Wallet
(If so I may politely call it)
The Sovereign Architect has given Mankind:
In front a Pocket gapes
Stuffed with our Neighbours' faults in various shapes,
While, for our own designed,
Another shrinks in emptiness behind.

The Two Asses.

TWO Asses were companions. On the back
Of one was placed a sack
Of Oats; the other bore
A bag containing Money. He was proud
To be entrusted with this glittering store,
Marched with high step and raised his war
note loud.
Warned by that fearful bray
Of something likely to be in their way,
The Enemy approached; the Ass they seized,
And quickly of his luckless burden eased.
He, making what defence
Lay in his teeth and heels,
Found himself pierced with wounds. A grievous sense
Of this outrageous injury he feels:
"Is this," he groans, "what people promised me?

The Ass who follows quietly retires
When fighting 's to be done,
And I—I fall alone."
His Comrade now appearing, " Friend," says he,
" The service that aspires
To high employment is not always best,
And may be very bad.
If only you had had,
With moderate fortune blest
Like me, an honest Miller for your Master
You would not be lamenting this disaster."

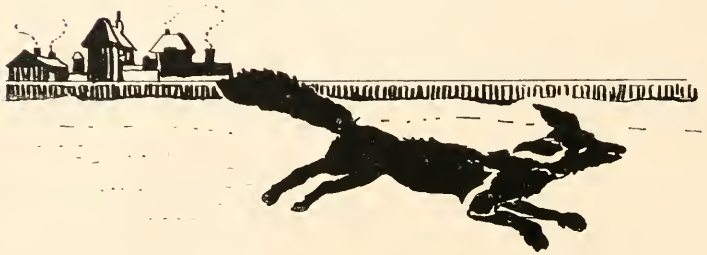


The Wolf and the Dog.

A WOLF was almost worn to skin and bone—
His foes kept such good guard;
He met a Dog, a large and handsome one,
Who by some chance had left his watch and ward
To wander in the woods. Most cheerfully
He would have torn this Visitor to pieces;
But he was a Species
To give some trouble to an enemy;
Therefore the Wolf—perforce a politician—
Respectfully advances, makes his bow
And compliments him on his fine condition.
"Fair Sir, I'll tell you how
You might be just as plump," the Dog replies.
"Quit your wild life and be the Friend of Man;
In truth, the like of you

Who live under the ban
Of his proscription are a wretched Crew—
Poor half-starved Devils, full of miseries.
Here there is nothing safe—not even food;
No regular supply of fowl and joint:
Everything at sword's point.
Follow me therefore; 'twill be for your good."
"What must I do this Friendship to ensure?"
Inquires the wolf. "As good as nothing: chase
Thieves from the door and keep the House secure;
Make much of those within;
Flatter the Master even to his face.
For this a plentiful reward you'll win:
Bones of all kinds—of Pigeons and of Chickens—
And other pickings;
To count for nothing many a kind caress."
The Wolf almost shed tears,
Picturing to himself such happiness.
Going along, he notices the hair
Worn off from the Dog's neck. "What's that?" says he.
"Oh, nothing!" "Nothing, Comrade? It appears
A little matter—still—" "What you see there
Comes maybe from the Collar that I wear."
"Collar? Oh, then you don't run always free?"
"Not quite; but where's the harm

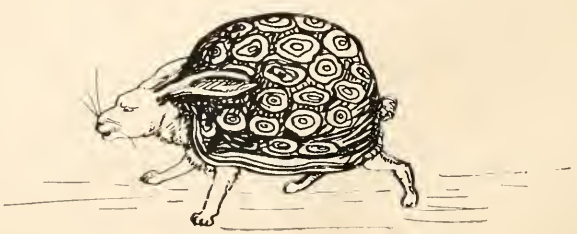
Of that?" "There is so much," retorts the other,
With sidelong glance half frightened and half cunning,
"That all your feasts for me have lost their charm
Nor would I for a Kingdom call you Brother."
So said, the Wolf runs off—and still is running.



The Hare and the Tortoise.

HE Tortoise had the boldness to declare
That for a Wager she would race the Hare.
The Hare pronounced it madness. "To restore
Your muddled wits," he said, "you ought to take
Two grains of clarifying Hellebore,
Gossip of mine." "Well, mad or not, I make
The Bet." The Bet was made; terms fixed; the whole
Amount agreed on placed beside the Goal.
The Umpire or the nature of the Stake
I know not: for the Distance—in four bounds
Our Hare had cleared it when, escaped the grip
Of panting Foes he'd given them all the slip
And doubling set at fault the sorry Hounds.
Therefore to linger he was not afraid.
A moment sleeping, biting now a blade,
Round him a casual glance bestowing,
Or listening which way the wind is blowing,

He leaves his Friend against old Time to race—
Who shuffles on at Senatorial pace
And slowly hurrying keeps the end in view.
He deigns not yet the Plodder to pursue,
Reflects what little glory is to get,
Winning of such a Rival such a Bet,
Considers it a point of honour due
Not till the latest moment to engage her.
Meanwhile he feeds, he dreams,
Muses on anything except the Wager.
At last he sees she has almost
Attained the Winning-post:
Then like a flash across the grass he gleams.
In vain! His powers he has misreckoned
And comes in second.
"The Stakes are mine, and who's fool now?" exclaimed
The Tortoise bold, with victory inflamed.
"My senses do I lack?
Such as I am, you see I've won;
How then would you have been outrun
If you had had a House upon your back!



The Grass Hopper and the Ant.

A GRASSHOPPER chanted her Song
The whole Summer long;
But found herself driven from home
When the North Wind was come,
With its snows, and no morsel remained
Where plenty once reigned.
She crept, in the last stage of want,
To her neighbour the Ant;
And begged for the loan of some grain,
Bare life to sustain,
Till the blessing of Spring came once more.
"I'll repay you before
The fall of the year, as I live,
And interest give."
The Ant is not famous for spending,

Nor noted for lending.
Says she to the Suppliant: "How
Have you lived up to now?"
"So please you, I sang, night and day
To all, my one Lay."
"You sang!" cries the Dame, with a scoff,
"Well, dance now. Be off."

A MAN saw in the grass an Adder curled :
"Ah, Wretch," he said, "I now perform an act
For which I shall be thanked by all the world."
On this, the Animal perverse—
I mean the Snake (there is in fact
Reason to make distinction) not the Man—
On this, the Snake thus napping caught
Was, quick as thought,
Imprisoned in a Bag and, what was worse,
Condemned to die. The other now began,
Wanting to make some show
Of Justice in the case, a solemn speech :
"Type of all Ingrates! To have pity now
Were weak indeed ; thy venomed Tooth shall reach
Mankind no more." The Serpent, in his tongue,

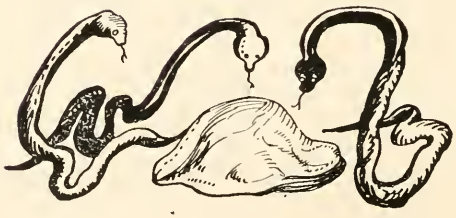
Baggage and bag he
banged against a wall.
Margaret Lillias Hodgson

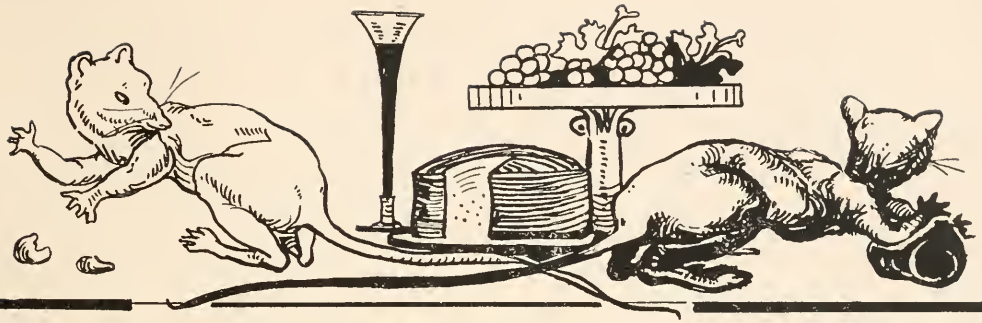
Replied the best he could: "You do me wrong.
To punish every thankless Creature
Is not the right of Human Nature,
Thankless itself. I rest my cause
On your own estimate of moral laws.
You have the power to kill me; kill me; still
Your Justice is your interest, pleasure, will:
According to these Principles condemn:
Yet by their right names will I label them.
Dying, at least I tell you to your face
The type of Ingrates base
Is Man and not the Serpent." At these words
The other stopped, recoiled a pace,
At last replied: "Your argument affords
But little ground for serious debate;
'Tis true I might myself decide your fate;
But let us take the case elsewhere." "Agreed,"
The Reptile said. A Cow there was in sight.
They call; she comes. To her the thing appears
As clear as day. Says she: "What need
To make pretence? The Adder's in the right.
This Man I have supported for long years;
No sacrifice to please him has been spared;
All must be given to him. My Milk, my Young—

This he consumes in days of vigour strong,
That when his health Time's lapses have impaired.
All that my bounty grants
Must go to serve his pleasures or his wants.
At last grown old he leaves me in some mean
Field patch. If only he would let me graze!
But no, I'm tethered. Had my Master been
A Serpent I could not have passed my days
Victim of such Ingratitude. Adieu.
I've said my say, and what I say is true."
The Man, convicted thus and full of spleen,
Said to the Serpent: "See what fire she spits;
It is some Driveller who 's lost her wits.
We'll ask this Ox." "Agreed," the Crawler said.
The Ox was called. He came with heavy tread,
Turning the whole case slowly in his head;
Deposed that still, year in year out,
For us alone with labours sore
He charged himself, and burdens bore;
That through his toil was brought about
The harvest of our fields
That Ceres yields,
A gift to Man, to him a grievous cost;
That all this round of Yeoman's service stout

From Human Lords received at most
Few thanks and many a blow; that when Old Age
Had crowned with cares his earthly pilgrimage,
They thought it honouring him his blood to spill,
Conciliating so the Gods' good-will.
He ceased. The Man said: "'Tis that worst of bores,
One of your dull, long-winded Orators.
He fishes out big words—with private grudge
Comes here as Prosecutor, not as Judge.
I bar him too." The Tree, appealed to, proved
Witness more damning yet. He grew, a Shield
From heat, from rain, from fury of the storm;
Pride of our gardens, Patron of the field;
Nor these his only claims to be beloved:
His goodly form
Bowed beneath Fruits. For any thanks Men owed,
A Rustic beat him—that was all his gain.
Throughout the year he showered blessings—showed
His Spring-time Flowers, his Fruit in Autumn's reign,
Summer's green coolness, Winter's fireside glow.
Would they but wield the Bill and not the Axe!
Cheerfully would he pay the tax
Of faggots for their hearth, and still would live,
By Nature constituted so

That all but being felled he could survive:
Yet black Ingratitude must deal that blow.
The Man, despite the verdict of them all
Willing to have his way at any price,
Exclaimed: "What stuff they talk!" And in a trice
Baggage and Bag he banged against a wall.





The Town Rat and the Country Rat

N a day a city Rat
Made a country Rat his guest:
To a menu of the best
Down the two together sat.

Here was many a dainty bit
On a Turkey carpet laid.
You may think what cheer they made,
What a time they had of it.

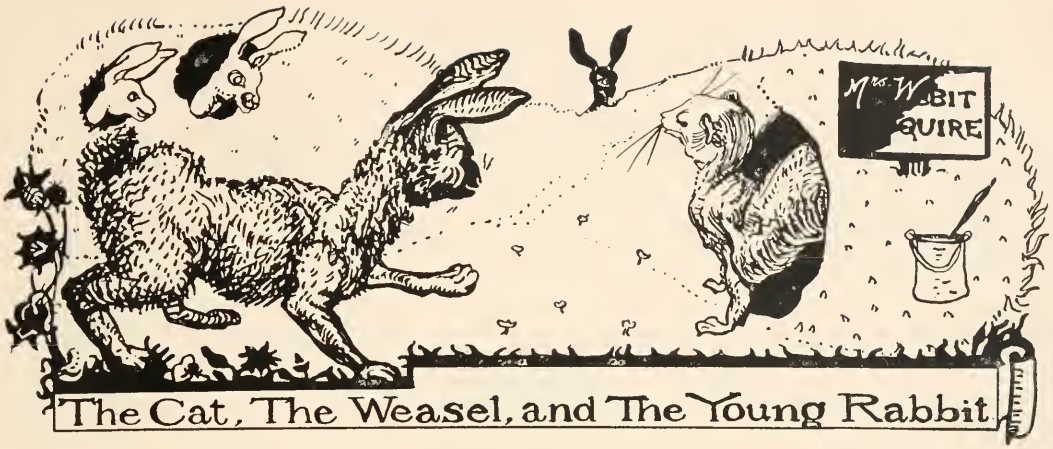
Nought was wanting that could lend
Sweetness to this feast superb,
But that nothing might disturb
Him who gave it and his Friend.

Hark! They start, with ears acute;
'Tis some noise their revel damps.
Quick as thought the Host decamps,
Quick the scared Guest follows suit.

All is still; their fears were vain.
Reassured the Rats emerge;
And the Cit begins to urge:
"Let us to the feast again."

"'Tis enough," the Rustic cries.
"Some day you must dine with me;
Not that I pretend to be
Master of such luxuries;

"But my food I can enjoy:
What I eat, I eat at leisure.
Friend, farewell—farewell the pleasure
Fear is able to destroy."



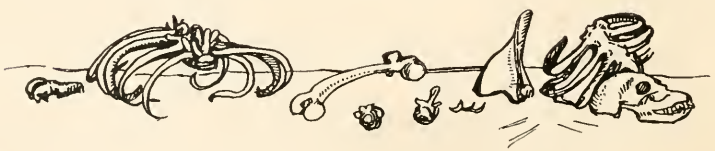
The Cat, The Weasel, and The Young Rabbit

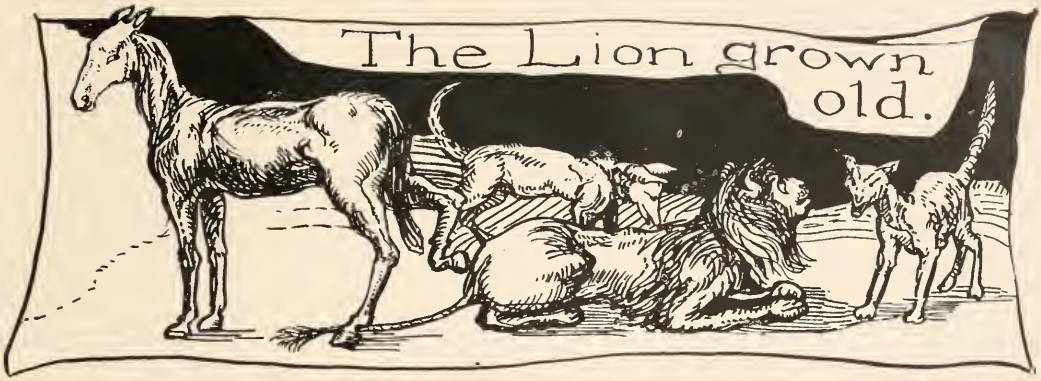
AME WEASEL took a fancy to inhabit
The mansion of a youthful Rabbit.
The Master's absence made
An entrance easy for the artful Jade:
'Twas on a day
When Spring had decked the Earth anew,
And he had gone his court to pay
To bright Aurora 'mid the thyme and dew:
So, having breakfasted to heart's desire,
Gambolled and frolicked on a sunny moor,
Beginning now of sport to tire
Our Householder (whose name was Jack)
To his ancestral Halls comes back
And finds a Weasel's nose within the door.
"Ye Gods of Hearth and Home, what have we here?"
He cries, convulsed with rage and fear.

My friends draw closer— closer still —
Extreme old age has sadly dulled my hearing.
MILK.
M. L. H.

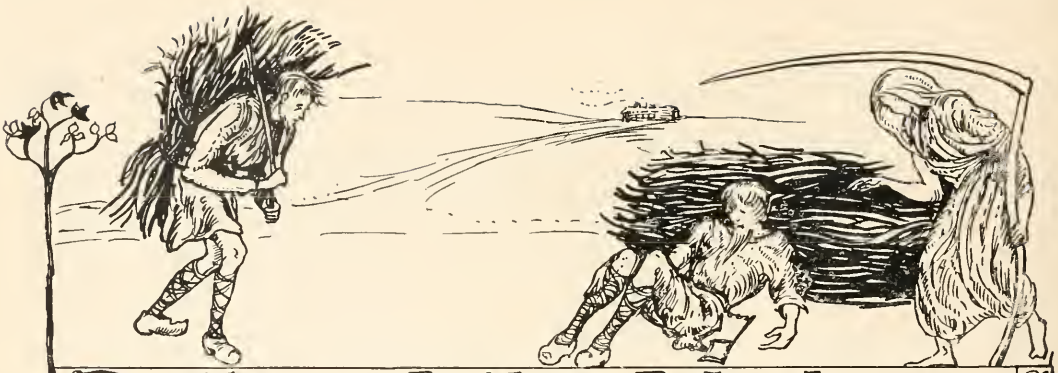
"Hi! Mistress Weasel! If you don't dislodge
From this Domain of mine I know a dodge
That soon will make you shift your ground:
I'll call the Rats from all the country round!"
The Lady of the pointed nose replied
That land belonged
To him by whomsoe'er 'twas occupied.
"As for Domain," says she, "you're hardly wronged—
A Crib to enter which you have to crawl!
But though it were a Kingdom I would know
What Law there is that makes it go
To John, to William's nephew, Peter's son,
Rather than Paul,
Or rather, than to me or anyone."
Jack pleaded Use and Custom. "These," says he,
"Have given the Title of possession,
From Sire to Son transferred in due progression,
To Peter, Simon, finally to John,
That is, to me.
Whoever occupies—a precious Law!"
"Well, let us cease this legal war to wage,
Each for the nonce his claim withdraw,
And lay the case before Grimalkin sage."
Grimalkin was a Cat
Thick-furred, long-whiskered, sleek and fat,

Who lived a Hermit's life devout (in spite
Of which he was a fearful Hypocrite):
A holy Cat resorted to by all
For settling Differences great or small.
Jack said he would accept
As Arbitrator this Adept.
The Pair have now arrived
Within the sanctum where Grimalkin lived.
"My Friends," said he, "draw closer—closer still—
That I may know your will:
Extreme old age has sadly dulled my hearing."
The Disputants approached him nothing fearing.
The good Apostle, when he saw that each
Was well within his reach,
Clutched them and then—his Clients' usual fate—
Settled their Differences small or great,
In manner very real,
By making of them both a common Meal.





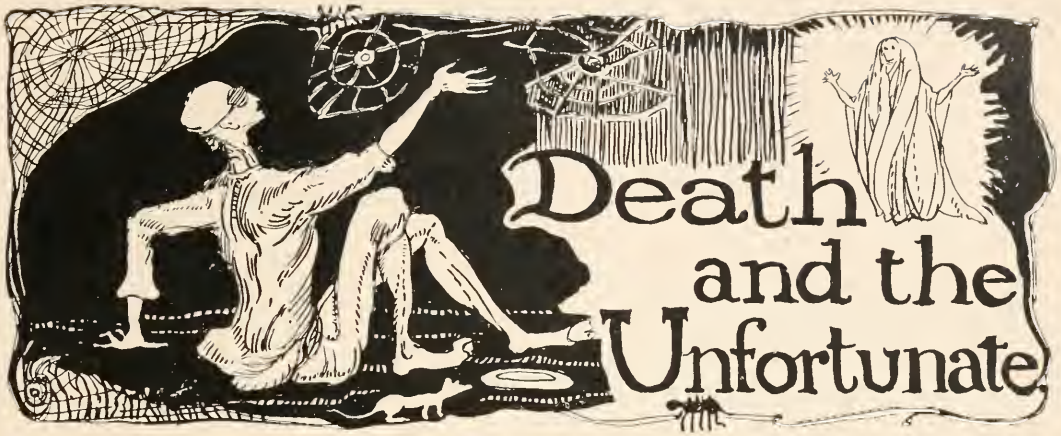
THE Lion growing old
And dimly dreaming of his ancient strength
By his own Subjects was attacked at length;
His weakness made them bold.
The Horse advancing near takes leave to kick,
The Wolf makes free to bite, the Bull to gore.
The miserable Lion, sad and sick
And age-enfeebled, scarce has heart to roar,
But faces Fate's last blow with patience brave;
When, seeing ev'n the Ass approach his cave,
"O Heavens," he cries, "let Nature's debt suffice;
Enduring wrong from thee is dying twice."



Death and the Woodman.

A WOODMAN poor, all covered with his load,
Beneath the weight of Faggots and of Years
Groaning and bent, his double burden bears
Towards the misery of his mean Abode.
At length outworn with utmost weariness
He lays him down; he dreams o'er his distress:
What pleasure has he had since life began?
Is there another such a wretched Man?
Sometimes no bread, and never perfect rest,
Crushed by home cares, by taxes sore oppressed,
By debt, the Soldiers and the toil enforced;*
He deems his lot of mortal lots the worst.
He calls on Death. She comes without delay.
"You summoned me," she cries; "what is't you lack?"
"Only to help me lift upon my back
This burden here," he says, "nor longer stay."

* Labour imposed as a tax.



A WRETCH cast down in misery extremest
Descried in Death a friend.
"O Death," he moaned, "how beautiful thou
seemest!
Come, quickly come, these cruel tortures end."
Death thought her Dart would really mend his case;
She knocks, she enters, darkly shows her face.
"Ah, what is this!" he cries. "That ghastly, gaunt
Insufferable Shape! Its sight
Fills me with horror and affright.
Approach not, Death; O Death, avaunt, avaunt!"

Mecænas was a gallant man.
He said one time: "Be this, my nervous frame,
Downstricken, maimed and crippled: so the span

Of life snap not my fate I will not blame."
Come never, Death !—
So murmurs Nature with her latest breath.

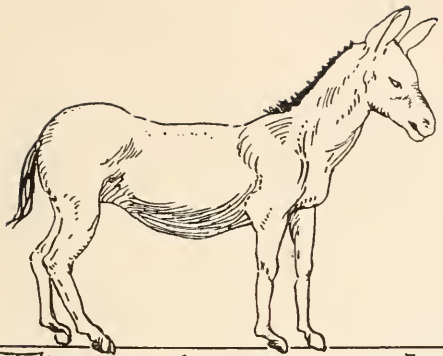
THE Oak one day said to the Reed:
"Good cause have you your hapless lot to mourn.
To you the clinging Wren's a load indeed;
The least wind that is born,
Ruffling the stream, bids you take heed
To make obeisance low;
While my proud top for Caucasus a match,
The arrowy sun-shafts not content to catch,
Braves all the winds that blow.
All's storm to you, all Zephyr calm to me.
Yet if you had but sprung beneath the shade
My branching arms have made,
Such wrong there would not be:
I'd shelter you though tempests did invade;
But you I oftest find
On moist banks in the Kingdoms of the wind.

Scant favour to your Race has Nature shown."
"Your pity," said the Plant, "I can but own
Kindly conceived. But give yourself no pain;
Such fears are vain;
Less dangerous are the winds to me than you.
I bend but break not. To this hour 'tis plain,
Since whole you stand, your mighty frame
Has served you to oppose
The utmost that these Blusterers could do;
But mark the end." As these his words uprose,
A darkness o'er the horizon came:
Soon from that gathering frown
Sprang forth the fiercest Child
The North e'er nursed within his bosom wild.
The Tree holds firm; the Reed drops down.
With rage renewed sweeps on the storm:
Lies low the giant form
Of him who reared his Heaven-neighbouring head,
And whose feet touched the Empire of the Dead.

The Wolf and the Lamb.

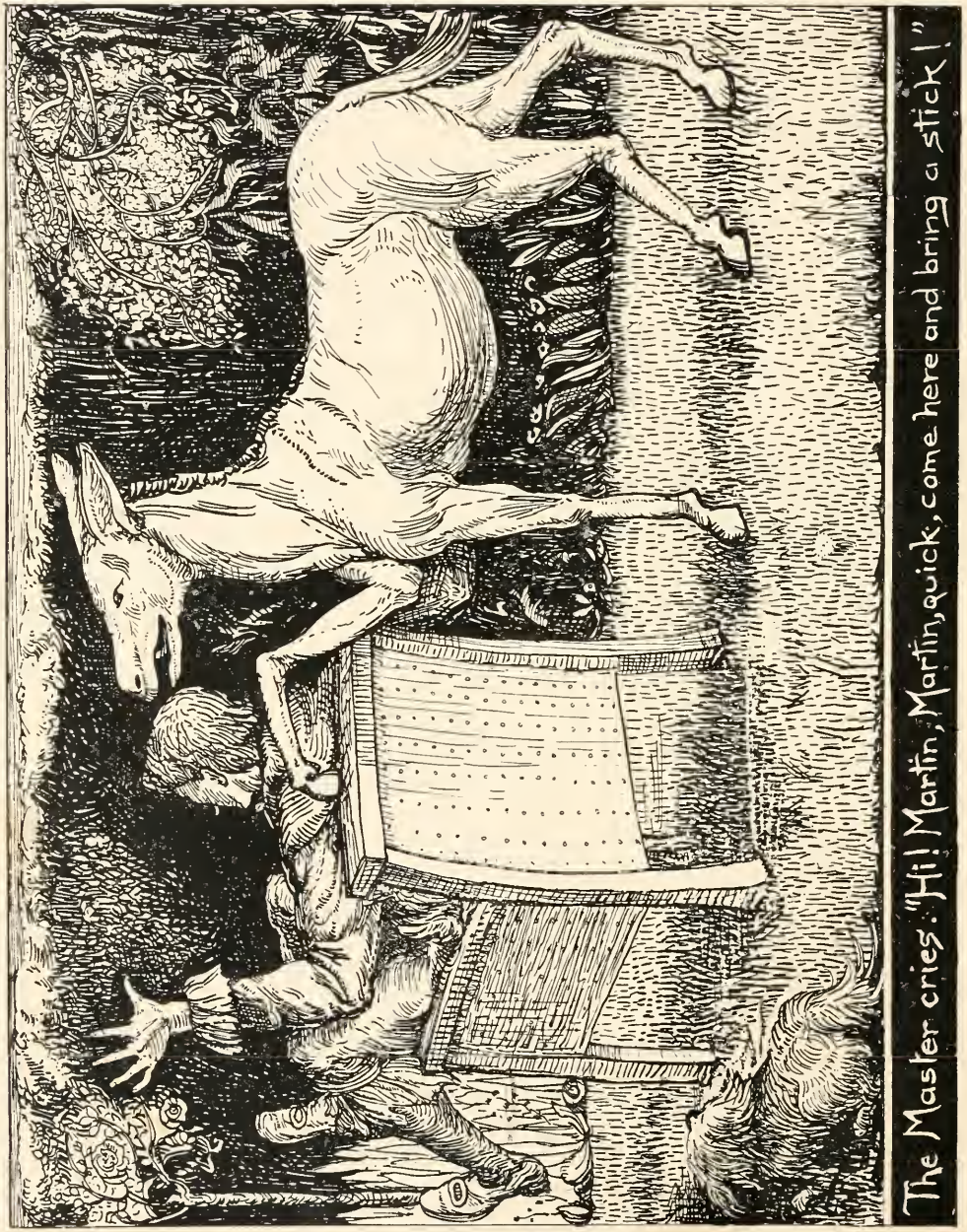
A YOUNG Lamb quenched his thirst
In the pure current of a running brook.
A Wolf came up; he seized his victim first,
Then said, assuming an indignant look,
"How dare you to defile
The water that I drink? It is but just
To punish you for this, and die you must."
The Lamb replied, "Sir Wolf, but hear me while
I speak in my defence.
It is not common sense
To say that I am guilty in this case;
Because the grassy bank
From which I drank
Is twenty yards below your drinking place."
"Guilty you are," snarled the ferocious Beast;
"And this I know at least:
Last year you slandered me."

The Lamb replied, "However could that be,
Since then I was not born?
And even now I have not left my Mother."
"Well, if it was not you it was your Brother."
"I have none." "'Tis no matter; I'll be sworn
The libel came from your confounded Crew,
Either from Dog or Shepherd, Lamb or Sheep.
Some one's to blame; I'll be revenged on you."
Into the Forest deep
He bore the Lamb away,
Nor scrupled further to despatch his prey.

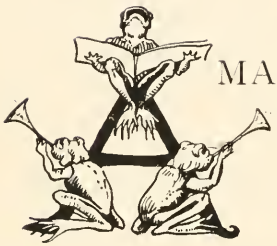


The Ass and the Little Dog.

DON'T play the part for which you are unfit;
You'll make but sorry work of it:
Never could homespun country Clown
Acquire the polish of the town.
'Tis few, the favourites of Heaven,
To whom the Art of Pleasing has been given.
Though someone, here and there, the charm possess,
So did not the deluded Ass of Fable
Who thought he might be able
To imitate the Lap-dog's warm caress.
He said within himself, "I see
This Dog, because he's small and slim,
The Friend of Master and of Missis;
While work and blows are given to me
There's only play and praise for him.
What does he do? He gives his paw,


The Master cries: "Hi! Martin, Martin, quick, come here and bring a stick!"

For which he meets with smiles and kisses.
If this is all that is required to draw
Kind looks from them, and words that flatter,
It doesn't seem so difficult a matter."
Full of this precious thought,
He found his Master in a garden chair
Enjoying half asleep the Summer air.
He takes the opportunity he sought;
Approaches, lifts a clumsy hoof
Roughened with toil
And grimed with every kind of soil,
And fearless of reproof
Touches him softly on the cheek;
Not without adding to this graceful pose
The only Music that he knows.
"O Heavens, what sentiment does this bespeak,
What compliment discharged from brazen throat!"
The Master cries. "Hi! Martin, Martin, quick,
Come here and bring a stick!"
Martin and cudgel were not far to seek:
The poor misguided Creature changed his note.

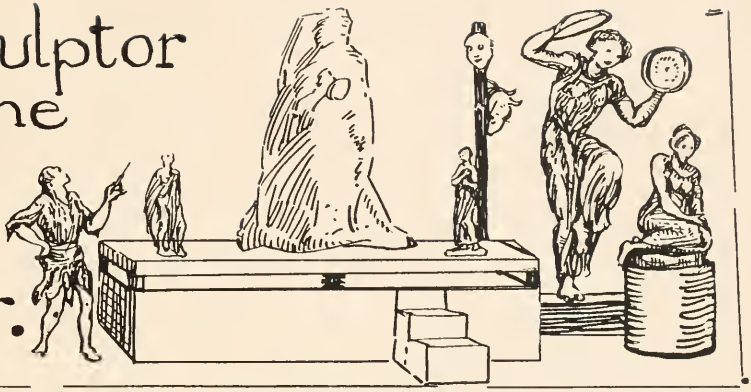


MAN afflicted with the Drunkard's curse
Had suffered in his health, his mind, his purse:
Such Folk achieve not half their days
Before each source of strength decays.
One day, this Drunkard being very drunk,
With every sense in deep oblivion sunk,
His Wife to cure him of his fatal vice
Employed a curious form of artifice:
She laid him in a Cellar dank and dark.
There when the vital spark
Of memory revived and he awoke,
She played on him a ghastly joke.
His opening eyes Death's trappings meet,
The Bier, the Funeral Lights, the Winding-sheet.
"Oh, what is this?" he cries. "My wretched Wife
A Widow left, myself bereft of life?"

The Wife descends, a Fury improvised,
Masked under snaky locks. With voice disguised
She stalks towards the Bier
And proffers him a Dish of doubtful cheer.
From all these signs believing well
That he 's a citizen of Hell,
" What fearful Thing are you ? " he faintly gasps.
The Phantom of the twining Asps
Replies : " A Minister from Satan's Court
With leave to aid the Dead : in short
I bring you food lest you succumb
To hunger in the darksome Tomb."
Still somewhat fuddled,
His wits a little muddled,
" Of food," he says, " 'twas kind of you to think,
But do in mercy let me have a Drink."

BETWEEN the Lion's paws
Crept from the Earth a Rat; at Death he stared.
The King of Beasts was angry, with some cause;
Yet, like a King, the trembling Wretch he spared,
Too mean a thing to slay.
But not too mean for gratitude to burn
Within his breast, this kindness to repay
And save, perchance, the Lion's life in turn.
Emerging from a glade,
The Monarch found himself entrapped beneath
A mighty Net around the opening laid.
Involved within its toils he roars in vain.
Sir Rat runs up; he saws with his fine teeth
One cord across. The whole Net leaps in twain.

The Sculptor and the Statue of Jupiter.



SO fair a block of marble seemed,
A Sculptor bought it. "What," said he,
"My Chisel, shall our triumph be?
Vase, urn, or Shape undreamed?

"A *God* we'll fashion. Could we bring
Jove' thunder in its foolish grasp,
Mortals would tremble, kneel and clasp
Their hands before Heaven's King."

Art's magic wrought upon the stone;
Its life-like features seemed to move;
It nothing lacked of being Jove,
Except the voice alone.

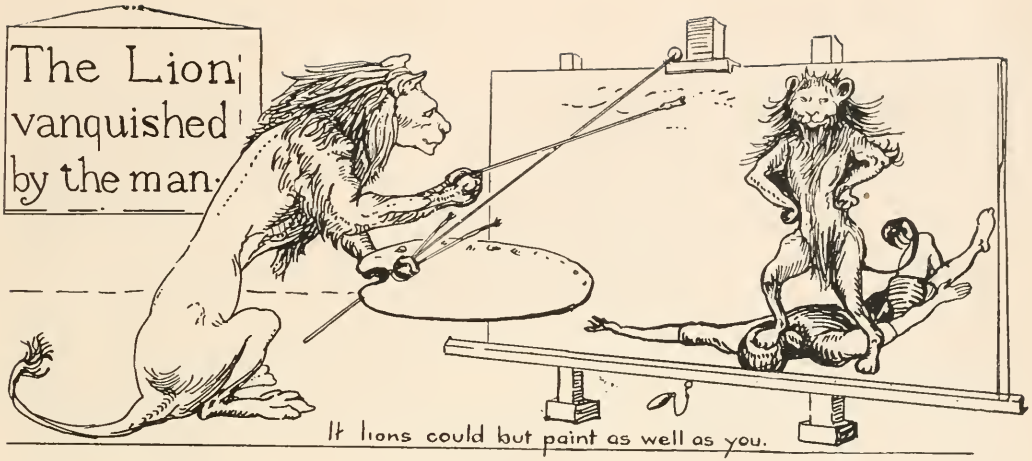
But scarcely had the Master's will
Made the dread Deity appear,
Ere he himself fell back in fear
Before his awful skill.

The Human weakness that o'ercame
This Sculptor, every Poet shares;
He fears the Gods whom yet he dares
From his own mind to frame.

The heart is touched at Art's new birth:
'Twas thus sprang up the Pagan creed
That spread, in thought and word and deed,
Far o'er the peopled Earth.

In Fancy's vision, clear or dim,
The artist sees a living grace;
Pygmalion loves the faultless face
That sweetly looks on him.

Aglow with Fiction's roseate gleams,
Abashed before the naked Truth,
Man would reduce to sober sooth
The offspring of his dreams.



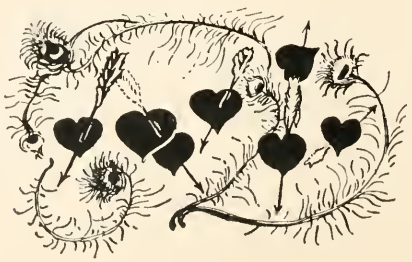
A PICTURE once was shown
Wherein was represented, as from Nature,
A Lion of huge stature
Seized by a single Man and overthrown.
This beautiful Design the people praise,
Its Author flatter.
A Lion, passing, drowned their idle chatter.
"The victory," he says,
"Is given here to you, I plainly see,
Yet no less it is true
That some poetic license has been used.
The Artist possibly may be excused;
But somewhat different would the Picture be,
If Lions could but paint as well as you."

Deafens all the Gods with his
Jupiter and Nemesis
& Folly be the guide of Love.
Hell's dread Judges - everyone -
Hear the clamorous plaint =
VAN QUILLER ALLAN — 1916

DAN Cupid 's all a mystery—
His Arrows, Quiver, Torch and Infancy:
'Tis not the study of an hour
Can trace the secrets of his power;
Nor to unwind the Tangle do I boast;
My humble Muse can tell at most
How the small God by chance unkind
Came to be Blind.
Whether for Men this proved a curse or blessing,
Is matter for a Lover's guessing.

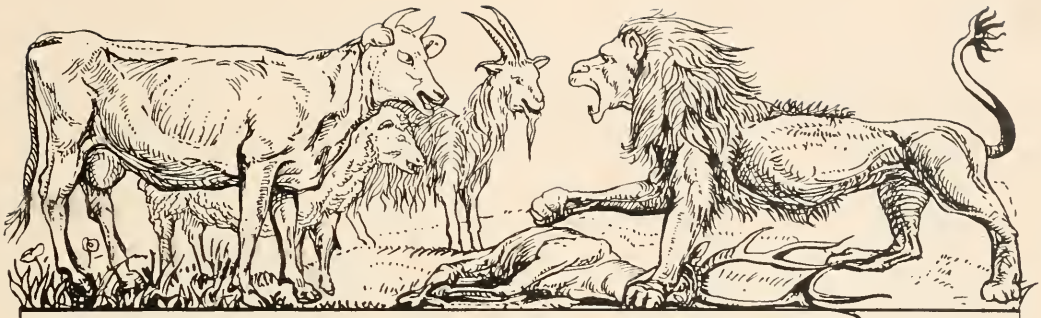
Love with Folly on a day
Passed in sport the time away:
He had not then in any wise
Lost the use of his bright eyes.
But a Quarrel rose, and Love
Would have moved the Courts above
To settle it in legal fashion;

But Folly in a fit of passion
Dealt him a blow of such despite
As plunged his pretty eyes in night.
Venus raged to see the cruel
Blotting of each shattered Jewel.
Wretched Mother! Loud her cries
Lament the loss of Cupid's eyes,
Deafen all the Gods with this.
Jupiter and Nemesis,
Hell's dread Judges—every one—
Hear the clamorous plaint: her Son
Through jeering Crowds his way would pick,
Nor go a step without a stick:
Vengeance for this should not be spared;
The damage too should be repaired.
When all her tale the Gods had learned,
And weighed the interests concerned,
They passed their Sentence. Ne'er again
Must Love and Folly part: the Twain
Must walk henceforth in Friendship's groove,
And Folly be the Guide of Love.



N a Tree's branch was perched aloft
An ancient Cock, experienced and clever.
"Brother," a Fox announced in accents soft,
"I bring glad tidings: Wars have ceased for ever;
A general Peace has been proclaimed.
Come down; let us be Friends;
To quarrel longer we should be ashamed,
Now every strife and all unkindness ends;
Do not delay; I go to spread the news.
You and your Kin henceforth can use
Your talents, free from dread and at your leisure,
In all affairs of business or of pleasure.
Don't doubt my Friendship at a time like this:
Your Bonfires you may light,
And crow with glee to-night.
Come, then, and greet me with fraternal kiss."

"My friend," replied the Cock, "you could not bring
Tidings to me more truly comforting
Than this you tell me of the general Peace;
And really 'tis a great delight to me
To hear it first from you. Two Hounds I see
Coming this way—which cannot but increase
Our joy—as Couriers doubtless they advance,
Considering their pace and eager glance.
Yes, I'll come down and we'll embrace all round."
"Good-bye," said Reynard, "I have far to go;
Some other time for kissing may be found,
And wishing joy." The Gallant was not slow
In making off, his nerves much shaken
By the alarming turn affairs had taken.
The old Cock grinned to see the Rogue depart:
Cheating the Cheat is cheating's highest Art.



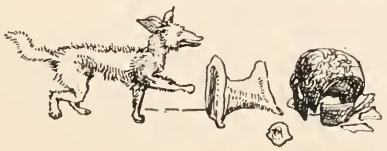
The Heifer, the Goat, the Sheep and the Lion.

THE Heifer, the Goat, and her cousin the Sheep,
Took an oath (which they fully intended to keep)
That they with the Lion their fortunes would share,
And all pull together through foul and through fair.
In the toils of the Goat a Stag found himself caught;
This prey to her Friends she religiously brought.
The Lion counts up the Assembly and cries:
"We are four to go shares in this excellent prize."
The Stag in four parts he proceeds to divide;
The first, as his own, he at once sets aside.
"It's mine," he observes, "for a very good reason—
Because I am King; to deny it were treason."
To this they had nothing to say.
"In taking the second I do you no wrong;
My right, as you know, is the right of the Strong.

A claim to the third, as the Bravest, I lay.
If anyone touches the last of the lot,
I'll strangle that one on the spot."

The Fox and the Bust.

GREAT Men, as a rule, are theatrical masks;
Mere show the applause of the vulgar commands.
What appears on the surface the Ass understands,
The Fox, with more thought, his intelligence tasks:
He turns a thing over and when, in this way,
He finds its true worth stands at zero,
Indulges in satire. The Bust of a Hero
Engaged his attention one day.
This Bust being hollow and more than life-size,
Our Gallant, in praising it, said:
"It greatly resembles the person that's dead;
Though quite without Brains 'tis a very fine Head."
To how many this comment applies!



A MAN, though somewhat late
In life and getting grey,
Made up his mind one day
To try the married state.
He had of Cash a very fair amount,
And—possibly on that account—
The choice of whom he pleased; all chose to please him.
Therefore he did not hurry the affair—
A course on such occasions rather rare;
But soon two Widows with Love's antics tease him.
One was quite young; the other, more mature,
By Art essayed to lure
The beauty back which Nature had impaired.
Each Dame, with glances coy,
Smiles and all sorts of coquetry, declared
That she would dress the hair of the old Boy.

The elder Lady pulled
The raven stragglers, one by one, away,
Altering affairs according to her whim.
Objecting to the grey,
The younger culled
The snow-white growth of wintry Age from him.
Both worked so hard that finally his head
Was grey no longer—it was bald instead.
"I'm much obliged, fair Friends," the Lover cried,
"To you for having shaved me;
Much trouble you have saved me;
The point of Wedlock I can now decide.
A Married Man, it seems, must frame his life
According to the fancies of his Wife,
And personal associations sever.
Accept a thousand thanks
For all your pranks;
A head thus bare will not be bare forever."

I AM not of those who observe, "It is nought,
It is but a Woman that's drowned":
I say it is much, and worth serious thought;
Since so much of life's joy in her virtues is found.
Respecting this subject I have to relate
A Fable, wherein it appears
That one of the Sex that endears
In a river encountered that dolorous fate.
The Husband set out to make search
For the Body, to pay it its due—
The Funeral honours ordained by the Church.
It chanced as he sought, with this view,
Along the stream's bank, in the depth of despair,
He met several people who were not aware
Of his loss. He explained his sad case,
Asking each, "Of my Wife have you seen any trace?"

"None," replied one of these; "further down you should go,
You should follow the drift of the stream."
Another remarked: "It is vain to do so;
Higher up you will find her, I deem.
Whatever may be the persuasion or force
Exerted by current and tide,
The spirit of mere Contradiction will guide
Your Wife in an opposite course."

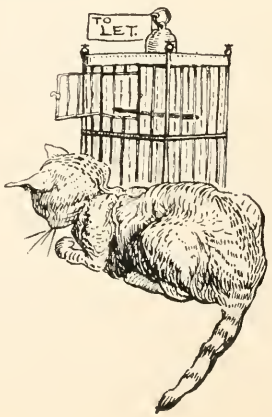
Tried to make a third
In this fraternity of cat and bird.
M.L.H

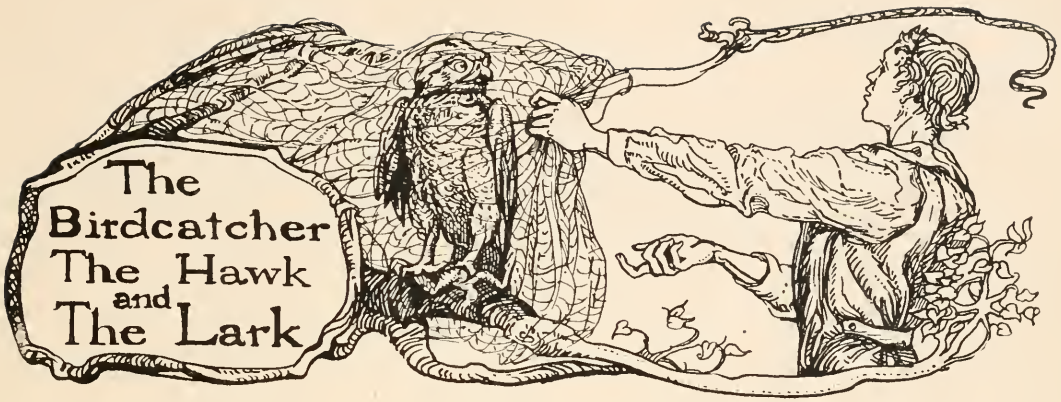
The Cat and the two Sparrows

A SPARROW and a Cat were bosom friends.
Contemporaneous as to age,
Their Infancy—on which so much depends—
They passed together: side by side were laid
The Basket and the Cage.
The Sparrow often would provoke the Cat:
The one employed his beak; the other played
At fighting with his paws,
Giving at most a half correcting pat,
And taking care in that
To sheathe the malice of his steely claws.
The Sparrow, less restrained and circumspect,
His Playmate smartly pecked.
Sir Cat, wise person and discreet,
With much forbearance these attacks would meet:
'Twixt Friends there's no occasion to give way
To spitefulness or temper's sway.

The Cat and the two Sparrows

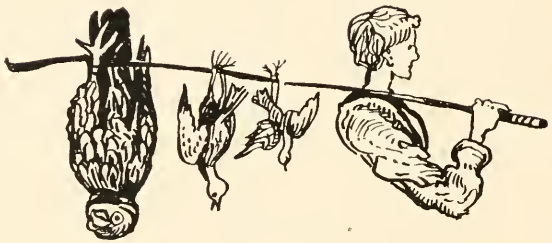
Used to each other from the dawn of life
Long habit served but to increase
Between these two the bonds of peace;
Mock battle never turned to real strife:
When, lo, there came upon the scene
A Sparrow of the neighbourhood who tried
To make a third
In this fraternity of Cat and Bird.
A furious Quarrel now arose between
The feathered Rivals. "What!" Sir Raton cried,
"This Upstart with my Comrade play the Turk!
This stranger Sparrow come to eat up ours!
Not so. Of him at least I'll make short work."
With that the rash Intruder he devours.
"Now really," says the Cat, "I never guessed
The flavour of this Species was so nice."
Alas, to that peculiar Zest
The other Sparrow fell a sacrifice!





A PEASANT, with the aid
Of Net and Mirror, laid
A Trap for Birds. The glassy, shining mark
Entices down a Lark:
Above the furrows softly hovering
A Hawk with outstretched wing
Falls, like a sudden gloom,
On the unconscious Bird so near her doom.
Should she escape the treacherous design,
'Tis but by meeting a more cruel fate,
A Tyrant more malign.
While, with the triumph of this deed elate,
The Hawk begins to pluck his quivering prey,
The Net enfolds him to his great alarm;
And as the Man runs up to take the two,

"Rustic," he has the confidence to say,
"Be merciful; I never did you harm."
The Countryman retorts, "That's very true,
And what has this small Singer done to you?"



The Tortoise and the Two Ducks.

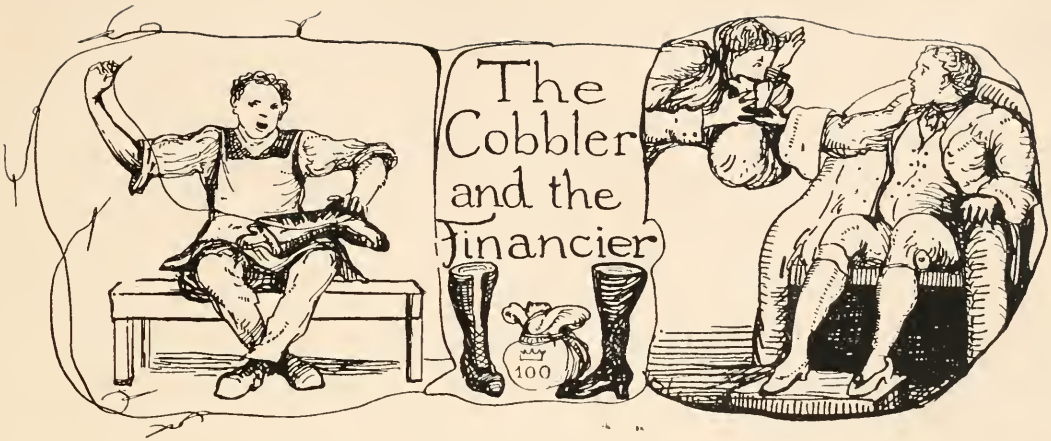
THERE lived a Tortoise once who wished to roam,
To leave her hole and o'er the world to range.
(Folks commonly are glad to get a change;
Even lame people hate to stay at home.)
Two Ducks to whom the Dame
Imparted this her beautiful desire,
Declared they had the means to quench its flame.
"To travel you aspire?"
Said these, "Look up, behold the way;
We'll bear you skyward to America;
A great Republic you shall visit,
A mighty people, and elicit
Much wisdom, from your powers of observation,
In studying the manners of the nation.
That's what Ulysses did."—One scarcely thought
To find Ulysses brought
Into the affair!—The Tortoise's ambition

Is greatly roused by this their proposition.
She jumps at it. The Fowls devise a trick,
Their promise to fulfil.
Transversely in her mouth they place a stick;
"Bite hard," they cry, "and mind you don't let go."
Then each at either end applies her bill,
And all mount up. The people with surprise
Behold the Creature rise;
The Animal of all accounted slow
Midway between her winged companions flies.
"A miracle!" exclaim the wondering Crowds,
The Queen of Tortoises amid the clouds!"
"Yes," she retorts, "I am in fact a Queen,
'Tis no mistake." Much better had it been
Had she passed on without a word at all;
For, letting go the stick, this hapless Dolt
Came crashing Earthward like a thunderbolt;
And Men remarked that pride had had a fall.

The Ass disguised as a Lion.

AN Ass, enveloped in a Lion's hide,
Abandoned toil to range the country-side,
And, Valour's prototype resembling,
Kept all the neighbourhood in fear and trembling.
It chanced the Fraud was not so truly shaped
But that an Ass's Ear in part escaped:
Martin, the Miller's Servant, spying that,
Divined the game our truant Friend was at;
And towards the formidable object ran
This seemingly heroic Man.
Imagine what the wonder must have been
To those not in the secret of the trick!
For soon a strange report began to fill

The country-side that Martin had been seen
With nothing but a stick
Driving a troop of Lions to the Mill.

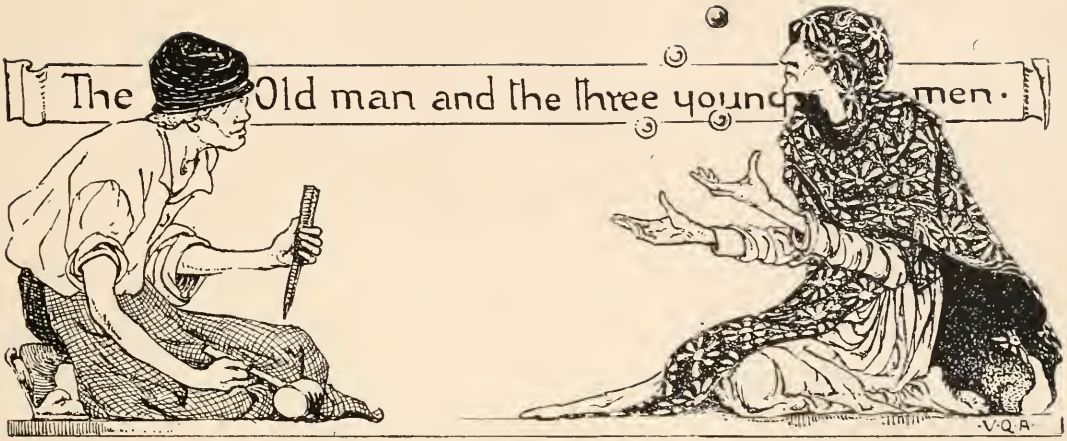


A COBBLER gaily sang from morn till night,
He had a heart so light;
Bent o'er his work he carolled through its stages,
Happier than any of the Seven Sages.
His Neighbour, on the other hand, whose wealth
Imposed on him eternal watchfulness
(This was a great Financier), lost his health,
Sang little and slept less.
At daybreak if he fell into a doze,
The Cobbler's piping brought it to a close;
Until at last the poor Rich Man complained
That Providential care
Had not made sleep a saleable affair,
Like meat, or drink, or aught by Money gained.
He sent for him whose song
Had worn him out so long:

"Now tell me, Master Gregory," he cried,
"What do you make a year?" "My faith," replied
The Cobbler with a smile,
It is not, Sir, my style
To count like that; I scarce can look ahead
From week to week; enough if, without fear
Of actual want, I can get through the year:
Each day provides me bread."
"Well, well, what do you earn then by the day?"
"Now more, now less: the mischief of it is
(And decent would our gains be but for this),
There are so many days when we must lay
Our work aside—they ruin us with fêtes,
Saints' days, that is;—and Master Parson prates
Of some new Saint in every sermon now."
The Rich Man smiled at this simplicity.
He said: "The case is hard, I must allow;
Take you these hundred Crowns, and carefully
Keep them laid by against a time of dearth."
This glorious sum to the poor soul appears
The total Treasure that the bounteous Earth
Has in a hundred years
Produced. The Man of Mirth
Goes home, and in his Cellar buries deep
The Crowns—and with them all his peace of mind.

No singing now; his one thought is to keep
Securely that which troubles so Mankind.
Instead of his light sleep,
Dark fancies fill his breast,
Fears, false alarms, the tortures of unrest.
All day his eye is on the watch; all night
His ear is on the strain;
Suspicions rack his brain.
To save himself from going mad outright,
He runs to him his singing wakes no more:
"Ah, Sir," he cries, "my sleep, my songs restore,
And take your Crowns again."

Three youths beheld with wondering eyes
A man of eighty planting trees.
V.Q.A.



THREE Youths beheld with wondering eyes
A Man of Eighty planting Trees.
"To build were well, but at your age," said these,
"To plant is not so wise.
What good, in Heaven's name, can you derive
From such a task, unless indeed you live
To years by Patriarchs of old attained?
Why should your lees of life be strained
To furnish Fruits that never can be yours?
Think only, you, of errors past;
Leave the high-soaring Hope, the Project vast,
To us the Young; of these the right is ours."
"It is not yours," the Old Man said. "The wine
Of Hope's precarious vintage mellows late,
Lasts little; and the withered hand of Fate

Juggles alike with Projects, yours and mine.
Our hold on life is equal—'tis so small:
For which of us may be the last to call
This genial Light our own—the sunset hue
Or daybreak's soft betrayal into blue?
What single moment, as the moments speed,
Assures us that another will succeed?
Those who come after me will owe
To me the shade of Trees that here shall grow.
And must you then destroy
My only joy in life, another's joy?
That is a Fruit which I can taste to-day,
To-morrow taste perhaps,
Or e'en beyond the lapse
Of years: and I may see the dawnlight grey,
And the first beam that braves
The Earth's reluctant gloom, above your graves."
The Old Man reasoned well. One of the three
Shipped to America was lost at sea.
The second, hardly luckier than the first,
Inspired by thirst
For glory, on the field of battle quaffed
Instead Death's bitter draught.
The third engaged in peaceful husbandry

And meeting thus the stroke of Destiny,
Fell from a Tree he was about to graft.
The Greybeard mourned them. Vigorous yet and hale
He on their Monument engraved this Tale.

"Holy Father! What means this?"

N a Cave the rocks beneath
Sat a Satyr and his Clan
Supping pottage; each his pan
Carried to his gleaming teeth.

See these hapless, happy Wights—
Kinsfolk, many a little one.
Carpet, covering had they none,
But prodigious appetites.

Sheltering from rain and wind
Comes a Traveller chilled with both;
They invite him to the broth,
He accepts the welcome kind.

Down he sits with thankful heart,
For no second bidding lingers,
Now upon his icy fingers
Breathes, some feeling to impart;

Then, divining naught amiss,
Blows upon his pottage. Gazed
Our poor Satyr all amazed:
"Holy Father! What means this?"

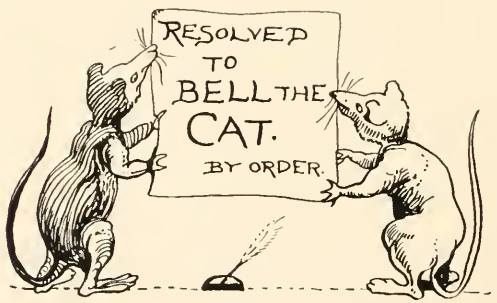
"Where's the wonder? By my troth,
'Tis not hard to understand:
This I do to warm my hand;
That I do to cool my broth."

"By my troth, it is a charm
You must try with driving rains,
And the winds that froze your veins,
See if they will blow you warm.

"For the honest Gods I hold
In high reverence love not such.
Hence, avaunt! Offend me much
People who blow Hot and Cold."

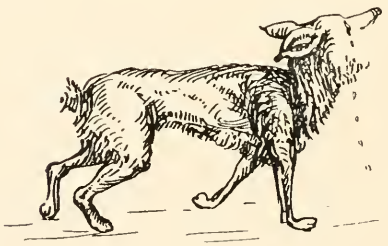
A CAT named Rodilard
Waged war against the Rats with deadly skill;
To find a Rat 'twas hard,
So many had been slain, one grave to fill.
The few still left, scarce venturing to steal
Out of their holes, but rarely got a meal;
And Rodilard, the cause of the whole evil,
Seemed to the wretched Race less Cat than Devil.
One day when 'midst this strife
The Gallant sallied forth to seek his Wife,
During the Witches' Sabbath that he made,
The half-starved Rats a solemn Chapter held
To deal with the emergency.
Their Dean, an individual grave and staid,
Moved (and the case, he said, was fraught with urgency)
That Rodilard be *belled*;

So that when next he girt himself for war,
Warned near and far
By the bell's sound of this infernal Ranger,
The Rats might easily avoid the danger.
Each one's opinion tallied with the Dean's:
It certainly seemed wise to bell the Cat.
The only difficulty was the means
Of doing it. Could there be found a Rat
To volunteer? Unhappily, not one.
But still the Vote was passed; and, for the rest,
The meeting rose impressed
With general sentiments of duty done.



A VETERAN Fox, a great invader
Of Poultry-yards, and Rabbit raider,
Having been seen to haunt a certain place
Was caught there in a Trap.
Evading this mishap
By Fortune's special grace;
Not without loss—he left his Brush behind;
Escaped, I say, but Brushless, and ashamed
Of being made unlike his Kind,
He entertained the whim
Of making all his Kind like him.
To gain the point at which he aimed,
One day, the Vulpine Folk in council sitting,
"Is it," he asked them, "seemly or befitting
That we should drag about this useless load
That sweeps the mire and dust from every road?

Why keep THE BRUSH? It ought to be cut off;
And if by my advice you bide,
To part with it you'll all elect."
"'Twere well that each of us his Brush should doff,'
Said one; "but why that great advantage hide?
Prithee, turn round and show us its effect."
At this Homeric laughter rose around,
In which the Pleader's voice was drowned.
Indeed there was no more to say.
Decorum blushes
At hint of argument 'gainst sporting Brushes.
The Fashion is continued to this day.

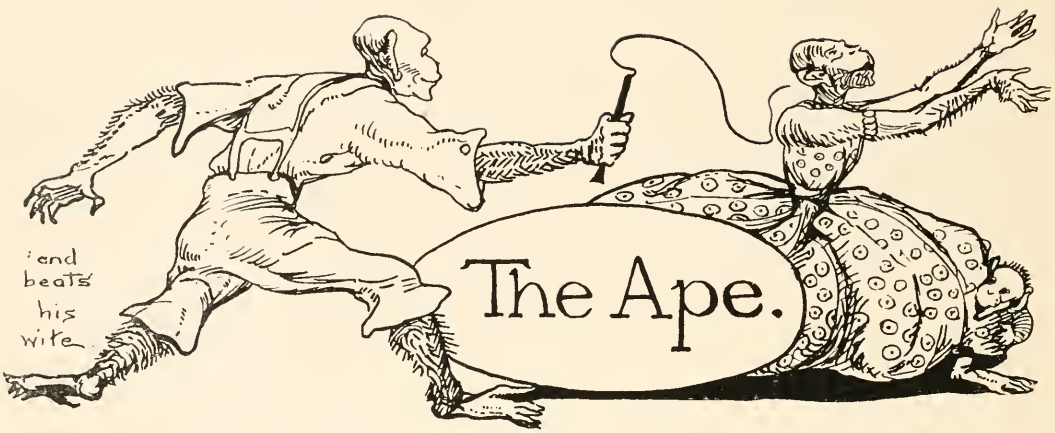


The Lion and the Ass Hunting

THE King of Beasts once thought of a device
To hunt at ease and make a glorious bag:
'Twas not a case of Rats and Mice,
But of the lusty Boar and lordly Stag.
To this important end
He made alliance with a curious Friend,
Namely the Ass of Stentor voice possessed,
As qualified to be his Hunting-horn.
The Lion hid him in a leafy nook
And ordered him to bray his best,
Convinced that nothing born
Of Forest Kind the hideous sound could brook:
The boldest must forsake his lair
In mere confusion and despair.
The Animals in point of fact were strangers
To that tempestuous voice

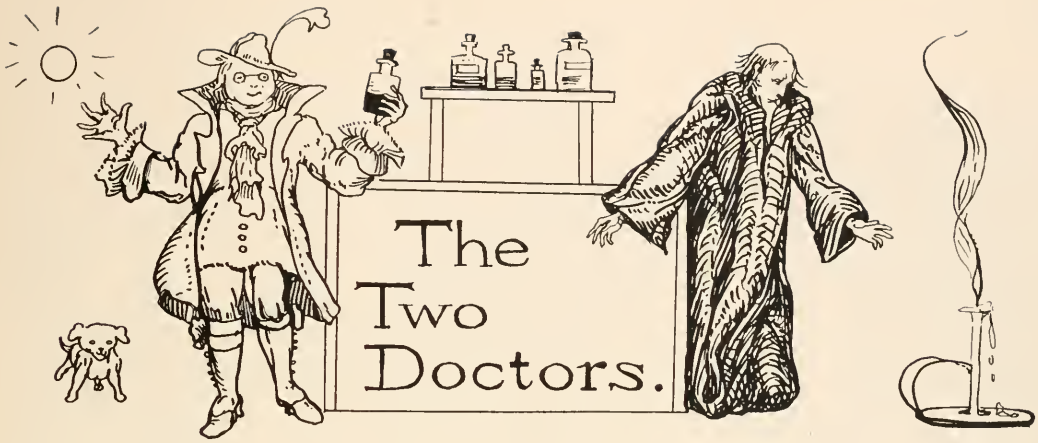
Fear seized them one and all : they had no choice but flight.

Which seemed to fill the air with hidden dangers.
Fear seized them one and all; they had no choice
But flight, rushed out and found themselves at bay
Before the Lion waiting for his prey.
The Ass took all the credit of the chase:
"Was I not perfect in my part?" he said.
"Yes," quoth the Lion; "it was bravely brayed;
Had I not known the talents of your Race
I should myself have been afraid."
The Boastful One, not daring to reply,
Resented much this irony;
Yet who could pass
Without rebuke the bragging of an Ass?

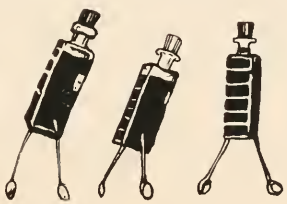


The Ape.

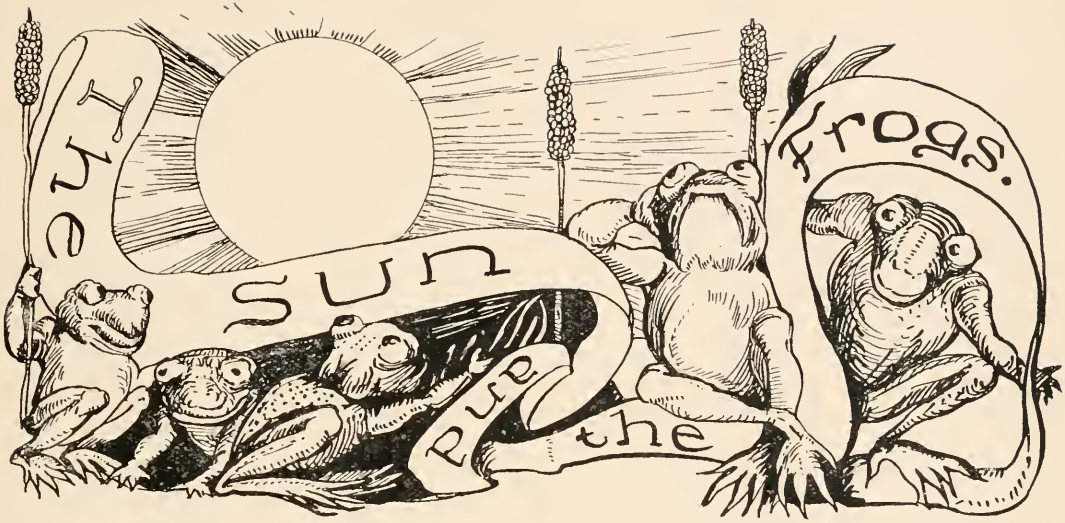
N Ape, who had been carried
To Paris, shortly afterwards got married.
He imitates some Husbands he sees there,
And beats his Wife. With sighs
And tears the poor Brute pines away and dies.
Their Son in deep despair
Laments this loss with unavailing cries.
The Father laughs. His Dame
Is dead, and other Loves his fancy claim.
Mankind he copies still; in vice is sunk;
Haunts Taverns now and frequently gets drunk.



TWO Doctors, Hope and Fear, stood by the bed
Of a Sick Man whom they had visited
In consultation. Much they disagreed.
Hope smiled and whispered, "We may yet
succeed;"
Fear frowned and muttered, "No, it is too late."
While the two Leeches argued o'er the case,
The Patient, who had noted well the face
Of Fear, sank back and yielded to his fate.
The Doctors triumph yet, yet disagree.
Fear says, "His death I rightly prophesied."
Hope answers, "Had the Man believed in me,
And my prescriptions, he would not have died."



JOVE
Deputation.
For animals so small, the Frogs, I fancy, did not argue badly.

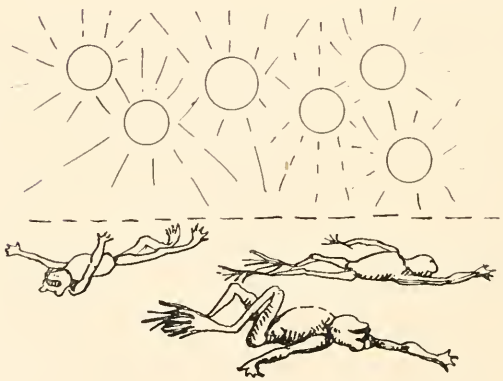


WHEN a King weds the Populace, with gladness,
Drowns in the bowl its sighs:
Æsop alone has pointed out what madness
This merriment implies.

"The Sun," he said, "once entertained a notion
Of Marriage. A commotion
Arose among the People of the Marsh,
The Frogs, who with one cry
Bewailed their destiny,
Pleading with Jove against a fate so harsh.
'What will become of us,' they said, 'if he
Should have a Family? A single Sun

A36501

Is almost one too many; six would be
Unbearable; our race would soon be run.
Instead of shadowed pool,
And rushes cool,
The Stygian wave would merge us one and all.'
Thus they protested sadly.
For Animals so small,
The Frogs, I fancy, didn't argue badly."



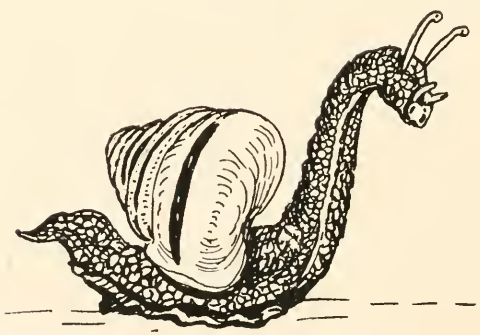
THE Lion once gave orders to proclaim
In the King's name,
That lying sick within his Cave,
Attacked by symptoms grave,
He called upon his Subjects to evince
Devotion to their suffering Prince:
Each Species should despatch a Deputation
By way of sympathy and consolation.
Therein he gave his promise to respect
The Envoys whom they should elect,
On faith of King that could admit no doubt;
And this was fairly written out,
As Passport good 'gainst tooth and claw,
A legal instrument without a flaw.
The Edict of the King was executed;
From various Species Spokesmen were deputed.
The Foxes all and some

Staying religiously at home,
One of their Family explained the reason
Of what might have an air of treason:
"The footprints on the sand," he said,
"Of those who have their visit paid
Towards the Cave present an obvious track,
But nothing in the shape of coming back:
This certainly seems rather queer,
And gives our Race some grounds for fear.
Although the King perhaps would kindly use us,
In this affair he really must excuse us.
The Passport looks all right—but then—
I see in fact
With certitude exact
How people get within this Den;
But how a single soul gets out again
Is not so plain."

The Heron.

THE Heron, with long neck and beak, one day
Took, with long strides, his melancholy way.
A river's bank he neared.
And gazed into the water crystalline.
A Carp about a fine
Young Pike in sport careered.
The Fishing Bird perceived an easy catch;
The two were well in reach; 'twas but to snatch.
But he thought fit to wait,
And let them stimulate
His Appetite a bit. He lived with care,
And dined at certain hours on certain fare.
The Appetite came soon, but not the Fish,
Who had sailed off. Some Tench now slowly swim
Quite near the bank. Alas, it was a Dish

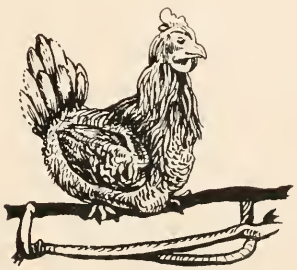
That disagreed with him!
"What! I eat Tench," he murmured; "I who make
But one slight meal! What, then, would people take
Me for?" The Tench refused, he saw a Gudgeon.
"A fine repast!" he grumbled in high dudgeon.
"Please Heaven, I'll never deign
My beak to open for a thing so small."
He opened it for less. No Fish at all
Came now; he watched in vain.
Famished at last (to end a shameful tale)
He pounced upon a solitary Snail.

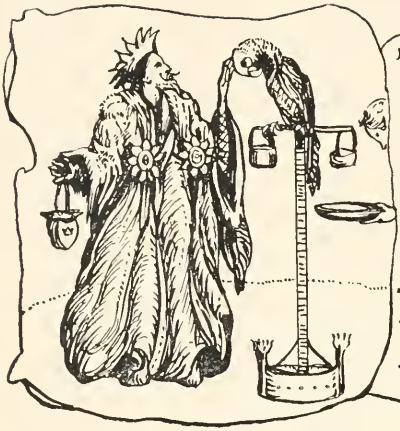


NCE Goodman Fox with great benevolence
Asked Gossip Stork to dine at his expense.
The fare was poor; in quantity not vast;
Our Gallant, for the whole repast,
Produced a slender soup which—sad to state—
Was served up on an ordinary Plate.
The Stork's long beak could hardly get a taste;
The rascal Fox lapped up the rest in haste.
To be revenged upon this Sinner,
The Stork in turn invited him to dinner.
On such occasions it was not his way
To deal in vain excuses or delay.
The hour appointed came;
He scampered to the lodging of the Dame,
Who greeted him benignly.

Mrs Stork
her house
A thing impossible to wilpine snout.
M.L.H.

The meal was cooked divinely;
His appetite was all a Fox's should be,
Or could be.
The meat, cut up capriciously
In little morsels, smelt deliciously.
But now—what puzzled much his wits—
Behold these dainty bits
Served in a long-necked Jar with outlet narrow.
Judge how it must his feelings harrow
To see the Stork's beak dodging in and out—
A thing impossible to Vulpine snout!
His hungry, homeward way he steers,
With tail between his legs and drooping ears,
Feeling as much a victim
As if some common barn-door Fowl had tricked him.





The Two Parrots the King and his Son.

TWO Parrots, Sire and Son,
Living in luxury on regal fare,
The Friendship of two Demigods had won,
Namely a mighty Monarch and his Heir.
Their years respective suited well this union;
The Parents were attached sincerely;
The Children loved each other dearly
Despite their flighty age,
Amused themselves in close communion,
And in their school-hours studied from one page.
This was great honour for the youthful Bird,
And some might even think above a bird's desert;
Howbeit the Prince, by instinct Fate-conferred,
Loved all the feathered Race. A Sparrow pert
And prone to quarrelling and gallantry
Became his favourite. A rivalry

Sprang up between these two. It chanced one day,
Engaged in sportive play,
As often happens to young Folk,
They disagreed; the game turned out no joke;
It got to blows in fact.
The Sparrow sparring wide with little tact
Such furious pecks incurred
That well-nigh dead, with trailing wing,
He seemed past all recovering.
The Prince, by fierce resentment spurred,
Wrung the Assailant's neck in sudden ire.
The news of it soon reached the Sire.
The unfortunate old Wretch with shrieks bewails
His loss, but nought avails;
The Talking Bird is now on Pluto's shore:
Say, rather, that the Bird who talks no more
Kindles such frenzy in the Father's heart
That at the Prince he makes a frantic dart
And, desperate with revenge, destroys his eyes.
For refuge to a neighbouring Pine he flies.
There, in Heaven's bosom fearless and secure,
He tastes the stolen sweets of vengeance sure.
The King comes hither—calls, to lure him down:
"Despair not thus; no tears our woe can melt;
Hate, malice, grief, in Friendship let us drown.

"Come down to mutual mourning — and your cage."

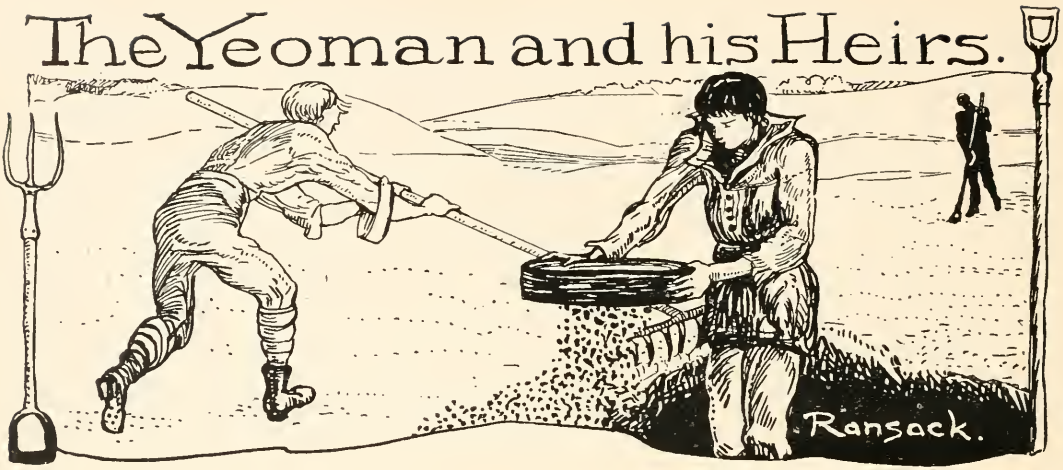
I cannot but admit,
Though sorrow is my only part in it,
The fault was ours; my Son the first blow dealt:
My Son! Ah, no, 'tis Fate that is to blame;
Fate from all time in her dread book has written
That by one arrow winged with certain aim
Our Sons with Death, with Blindness, should be smitten.
Come down to mutual mourning—and your Cage."
"Sir King," the Parrot said,
"Do you suppose that at this stage
Of our misfortunes—after outrage wrought
By me upon the head
Of your belovéd Son, I can be brought
To let myself be caught?
You speak of Fate!
And do you think to tempt me with the bait
Of language so profane?
But whether Fate or Providence divine
Over our actions reign,
'Tis writ on high that I on this high Pine,
Or in some Forest depth profound,
Shall pass my days, far from the baneful sight
Of what should be to you a cause of spite
And hate and fury. Wrongs of Kings are crowned
With vengeance sweet; for as the Gods you live.

You say that you this trespass would forgive:
I do believe it; yet 'twere best for me
Out of your view and keeping to remove.
Sir King, my Friend, begone; in vain you wait;
Never will I at your disposal be.
Absence alone can serve to weaken Hate,
As presence unremitting weakens Love."

The Saying of Socrates.

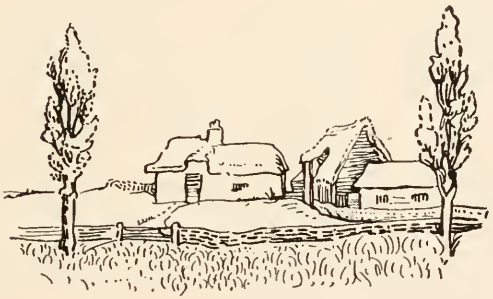
ABOUT a House that Socrates was building
Arose discussion. None approved his plan:
The lack of moulding, pannelling and gilding
Did little honour to so great a Man;
Then the façade was plain; and all
Agreed that the Apartments were too small.
To these objections, urged in courteous style,
Socrates answered with a placid smile.
"Such as it is, pray Heaven it be
Filled with true Friends," said he.

The Yeoman and his Heirs.



A THRIFTY Yeoman, being near his Death,
Admonished thus his Heirs with failing breath:
"My Sons, this counsel ponder well:
The Land that will be yours by no means sell;
It hides the Treasure of a time long past—
I know not where—but Industry and Toil
Will bring you to it; 'twill be yours at last.
Therefore, the harvest garnered, turn the soil,
Rake, rummage, ransack; let the hand
Pass and repass, no whereabouts unsought."
The Sons inheriting dig up the Land
Till not a clod intact remains.
Next year a golden harvest brought;
But other Gold was none—no thrill of pleasure

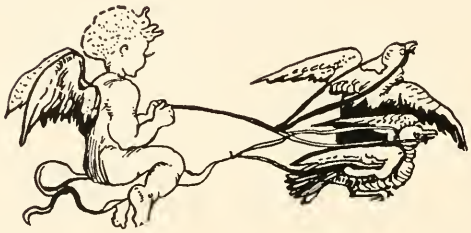
To quit them for their pains;
Yet was the Father wise
In showing them, ere Death had closed his eyes,
That Labour is itself a hidden Treasure.



MY
SHEPHERDESS
SO KIND SO
YOUNG, WHOSE
LOVE BEYOND
ALL LOVES,
WITH
ARTLESS
EARLIEST
PLEA I
MADE MY
PRIZE.

LOVERS, happy Lovers, would you roam?
Let it be on the confines of your Home.
Be each the other's World of fair and true,
Always varied, always new:
Keep that, and count for nothing all beside.
I have loved once: I would not then have changed
For all the Louvre's Art treasures ranged,
Earth's buried Stars or heaven's Gems enskied—
Changed the meadows, changed the groves,
Blest by her footfall, brightened by her eyes—
My Shepherdess so kind, so young,
Whose Love, beyond all Loves,
With artless, earnest plea I made my prize!
When will return those moments blissful long?
So much is there of joy in life to seize,

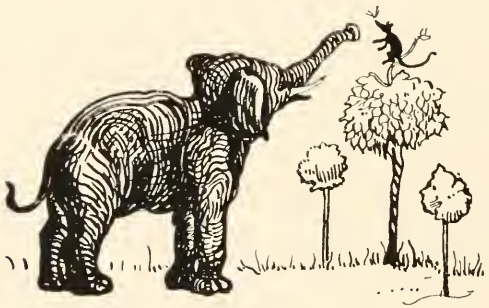
And nothing now my weary soul can please.
Oh for the Heart-flame leaping clear and strong!
Must I a visionary charm recall,
And find Love gone for good and all?



The Rat and the Elephant.

ONE day a Rat, the smallest of his Race,
Observed a mighty Elephant pass by
With all his Equipage, at solemn pace.
Upon the Creature's back, three stories high,
A Sultan glorious,
His Dog, his Cat, his Ape,
His Parrot and his Wife—in fact his House
Goes journeying along;
While people stare and gape.
The Rat was much astonished that a throng
Should congregate this mass to gaze upon.
"What! Does mere bulk," he says, "these fools impress?
As if to occupy more space or less
Were of TRUE GREATNESS the criterion!

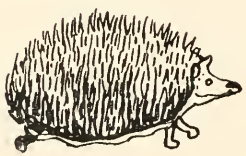
What marvel in this awkward Giant lies?
Are Children even frightened at his size?
I count myself, though little I may be,
Quite as important, morally, as he."
Much more, equally sage,
He would have said but for a slight event.
Just then the Sultan's Cat
Sprang softly from her Cage,
And showed him, by one little argument,
The difference 'twixt an Elephant and Rat.

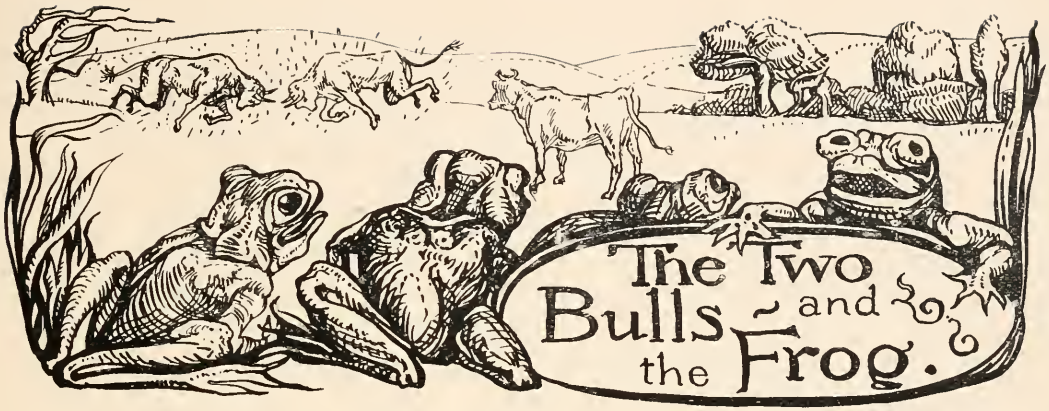


The Fox, the Flies and the Hedgehog.

INTO the deep recesses of a wood
A Fox, subtle and sly,
Fled wounded in the chase, and fell. His blood
Attracted quickly that winged Parasite
Vulgarly called the Fly.
He railed at Fortune, that in very spite
She should ill-use him so,
And let him be devoured, with tortures slow:
"What! Flies regale on me, the shrewdest Beast
Of all the Forest kind!
Since when did Foxes serve for such a feast?
Or for what purpose was this Brush designed?
Now Heaven confound you, Animals profane!
Find out some meaner fare whereon to feed."
Hearing him thus complain,
A Hedgehog wished to save him from the greed

Of his tormenting foes.
"Hear, Master Fox," he said, "what I propose:
Let me jump up and, rolled into a ball,
Upon your Body fall;
And with my thorny darts
Transfix, by hundreds, these your enemies."
The Fox in anguish starts.
"My Friend, for Heaven's sake, don't do that," he cries,
At this new horror utterly aghast.
"Let them, I pray you finish their repast.
Their appetite abates; a hungrier Swarm
Would take their place and do me deadlier harm."





TWO Bulls, as is the custom with such Cattle,
Fought for a Heifer who was standing by
Watching with much complacency the battle.
A Frog began to groan and sigh.
"Well, what's the matter now with you?"
Inquired another of the Croaking Crew;
"Why do you groan?" "Good reason why,"
Replied Cassandra. "Don't you understand
What soon must be the end of this dispute?
One of the two will win. The other Brute,
Driven from this flowery meadow land,
His appetite will lead
On the rank herbage of our Marsh to feed.
His hoofs will make our span of life the briefer,
Stamping us down without the slightest heed—
All which we owe to Madam Lady Heifer."

The Frog's Complaint had reason in it.
One of the Bulls sought refuge in the Marsh,
And free from all intention harsh
Smashed some one in his rambles every minute.

The Oyster and the Plaintiffs.

TWO Travellers upon the sand espied
An Oyster left there by the ebbing tide:
Their eyes devoured, a finger each stretched out;
But as to Tasting there arose some doubt.
One stoops to handle the delicious food;
The other pushes him. "Methinks 'twere good,"
Says he, "to know who has the best right to it.
Let him who first perceived it be the one
To eat; the other one shall see him do it."
"Well, if on that alone,"
Replies his Friend, "this matter is to rest,
I have, thank Heaven, eyesight of the best."
"And mine is rather penetrating too,"
The first rejoins; "believe me, on my life,
I saw it before you

"Ah, well, you saw and I have touched." While keen
And angry grew the strife,
A Man of Justice came upon the scene;
To him they instantly refer the case.
The Judge, with a grave face,
Opens the Oyster first and gulps it down,
All rivalry to quell.
Assuming then a Presidential frown,
"The Court," he says, "awards you each a Shell.
It grants no costs, but orders that you cease
Further dispute and both depart in peace."

A MISER had amassed so great a Hoard
He knew not where to keep it safely stored.
Greed, sister of dull Ignorance,
Had dimmed the eye of Vigilance,
And Cunning made him ludicrously wary
In choosing a Depositary.
He said—was ever argument more sterile?—
"An object of temptation is in peril,
And if within the House I keep this pelf
I certainly shall steal it from myself."—
"What! Rob yourself! Can that be any pleasure?
You quite misunderstand the use of Treasure.
Know this, for your enlightenment:
Wealth is not wealth except 'tis spent;

except
its
spent
Greed - sister of dull Ignorance,
Had dimmed the eye of Vigilance.
And Cunning made him
ludicrously wary
In choosing a
depositary.
V.Q.R.
Wealth
is
not
Wealth

Unless you can employ it
Ere Age creeps in, you never will enjoy it;
The toil of winning and the care of heaping
Make, in the end, the prize not worth the keeping.—
Of this anxiety that grieved him
Plenty of Folk would gladly have relieved him:
Our man preferred the Earth: an ancient Crony
Assisting him, they bury there the Money.
After a time the Miser goes to gloat
Over his Hoard—and finds no single groat.
Suspecting with some reason his old Friend
He calls on him and says: "Prepare to lend
A hand; of some few Coins I'm still possessed,
And these I wish to bury with the rest."
The Crony, guided by a flash
Of inspiration, takes the stolen Cash
And puts it where it was before,
Meaning to have it yet, and something more.
Our Miser is, however,
For this too clever one too clever.
He loses not a moment to get back
The threatened Gold, resolved to rack
His brains no more with hoarding, hiding:
His wealth he now enjoys, deciding
To take no further risk, and since

'Tis thus recovered spend it like a Prince.
While the poor Thief, suspicious grown,
Runs to regain what now he calls his own;
And finding not a trace of it
He nearly has a Fit.

The Taper.

THIS from the Gods' Abode that the Bees come.
The first Swarm, so the tale is, made their home
In Mount Hymettus; there
They sipped the sweets distilled from that pure air.
When Men had made these heavenly Children yield
The golden Treasure in their caskets sealed;
Or, as we now should say,
When from the comb the honey had been drained,
And nothing but the wax remained;
Candles were made, and burned with cheerful ray,
And many a Taper lived its little day.
One of this fleeting Band
Noting that Clay was hardened into Bricks
By heat, and so escaped Time's murderous hand,
An envious desire his bosom pricks
To suffer the like change.

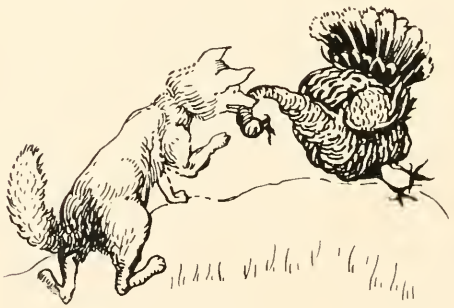
A new Empedocles, to wasting fires
Doomed by ambition strange,
He leaps into their midst and so expires.

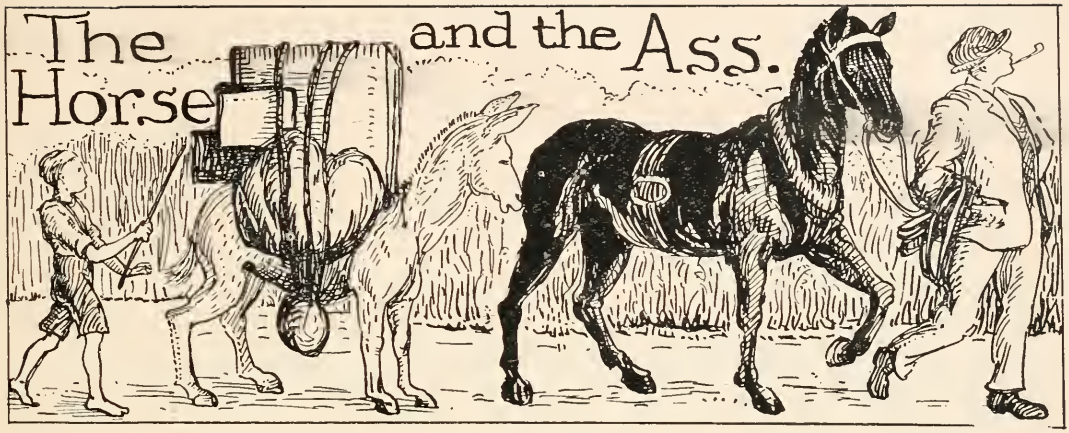
He had not drunk at Logic's sparkling rill;
His reasoning powers were almost *nil*.

The Fox and the Turkeys.

A POLE, set up with artificial perches,
Served for some Turkeys as a Citadel.
A Fox observed it, in his nightly searches,
Looked up and saw each Bird a sentinel.
He cried: "These people hold me in contempt.
Are they, then, from the common Law exempt?
Not so, by all the Gods, not so, I swear!"
The Moon then shining seemed, in this affair,
To favour those for whom his schemes were laid.
Reynard, no novice in his treacherous trade,
Employs all kinds of Art; pretends to climb,
Falls back, upon his hind legs struts sublime,
Feigns Death, then incontinently starts.
So many different parts
Harlequin ne'er assumed within the time.
He glances in the moonlight dizzily,

Playing a thousand tricks.
Meanwhile no Turkey dares to close an eye :
The subtle Entertainer makes them fix
Their strained attention on one changing point.
The fascinated Fowls feel every joint
Relaxed, benumbed.
Each moment some one drops.
A fearful massacre ensues, nor stops
Till have the wretched Creatures have succumbed.





AN Ass and a young Horse went the same road.
The Horse was harnessed only; the poor Drudge
Staggered half-dead beneath a heavy load.
He prayed his Comrade that he would not grudge
A little help to give,
Else he would never reach the town alive.
"The thing I ask," he said, "is not so great;
Since you for sport might carry half this weight:
The whole is Death to me."
The Horse refused. He would not condescend
To such low service; but preferred to see
The Menial die, to being called his Friend.
Yet he discovered soon

The error of denying this small boon.
They make him bear—the sequel of his pride—
The Ass's Burden and the Ass's Hide.

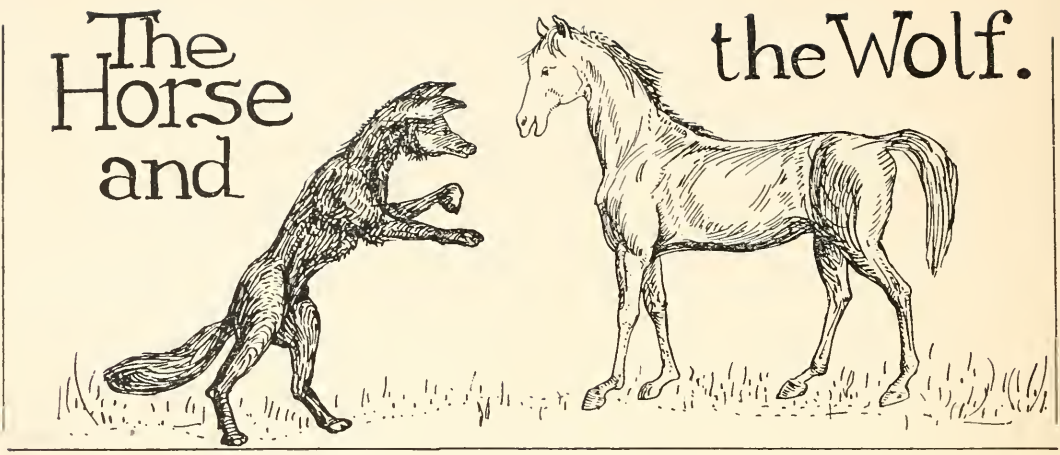
The Fox the Wolf and the Horse.

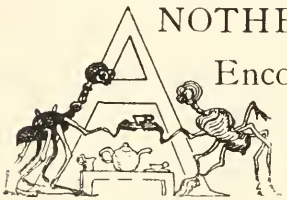
A FOX still young though versed in cunning's lore
Saw what he'd never seen before,
A Horse. He scampered off to tell his Mate,
A certain Wolf not reckoned overwise.
"An Animal," he said, "of monstrous size
Stalks in our meadows haughty and sedate;
The wondrous sight still flits before my eyes."
"Is he a match for us?" the Wolf inquired
Grinning. "Describe him to me, I beseech."
"Were I a Painter or a Bard inspired,"
Replied the Fox, "I scarce could reach
The points of excellence in him revealed;
But come and see. Perhaps it is some prey
That Fortune kindly places in our way."
They went. The Horse at pasture in a field

Was going to decamp,
Not greatly fancying neighbours of that stamp.
"My Lord," said Reynard, "stay. Your humble slave
To know your name would crave."
The other who was not devoid of wit
Said: "Gentlemen, yourselves my name may read;
My Shoemaker has written it
Under my hoof as plain as in a book,
If you would care to look."
The Fox excused himself—must plead
His ignorance. He had no education
Given him by Parents of such lowly station
That just a Burrow in the Earth
Comprised their whole estate. "A nobler birth
My Friend here boasts," he said, "whose people, quite
Genteel, have had him taught to read and write."
The Wolf much flattered by this eulogy
Approached the mystic hoof. His vanity
Cost him four teeth. The Horse with sudden kick
Stretched him full length and galloped off as quick.
Behold our Scholar sprawling
Half stunned beneath this dreadful mauling.
"Brother," the Fox observed, "I must
Believe that what was told me once is just;

This animal has written on your jaw
In characters of blood an ancient Saw:
ALL UNKNOWN THINGS THE WISE MISTRUST."

The Horse and the Wolf.

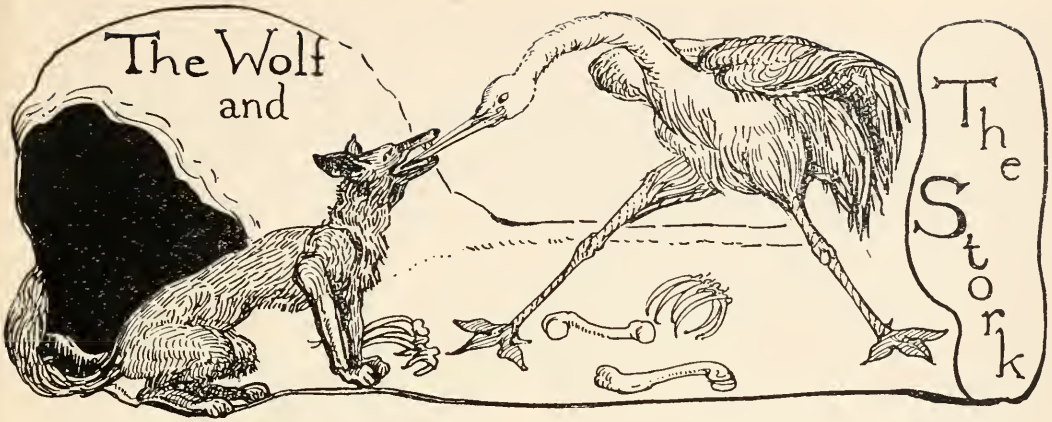




ANOTHER Wolf though gifted with more sense
Encountered much the same experience:
When Zephyr breezes had endued
The Earth with youth renewed,
And Beasts were sent from Winter-quarters dark
To crop the welcome green of field and park,
This Wolf, I say, in Spring's glad season,
Espied a Horse turned out to graze,
With feelings mixed and hungry gaze,
And thus began within himself to reason:
"A goodly prize," he mused—"but how to win it?
Some Art I must employ
This ponderous Creature to decoy,
And then I'll nab him or the Devil's in it."
So said, with solemn gait and looks demure,
Himself he introduces

As a Physician knowing well the uses
Of herbs and simples, who could cure
All sorts of Ailments. If his Lordship deigned
His symptoms to reveal
And nothing of his case conceal,
He, Master Wolf, with joy unfeigned,
Would cure him straight and make no charge:
For thus to see him in that meadow straying
Unbridled and at large,
Argued some Illness there was no gainsaying.
The Horse replied, his specious Friend to humour,
"I have behind my hoof a painful Tumour."
"My Son," the Wolf said sagely, "'tis a part
Most subject to disease. You need my Art.
I have the honour often to attend
My Lords, the Horses; truth to tell,
I practise Surgery as well
As Physic; on my skill you may depend."
So, stooping, only to gain time,
He carried on this curious pantomime,
Thinking to nail his Victim in the end.
But now, suspicious of some evil trick,
The Horse launched out a kick
By which the Doctor's jaw was almost shattered
And several of his grinders scattered.

He to himself his error sadly owns:
"The Animal's a fool," he groans,
"That apes the Cringer to disguise the Clutcher,
And sticks not to his proper Trade.
The suave Physician's part I would have played
Who never yet was other than a Butcher."

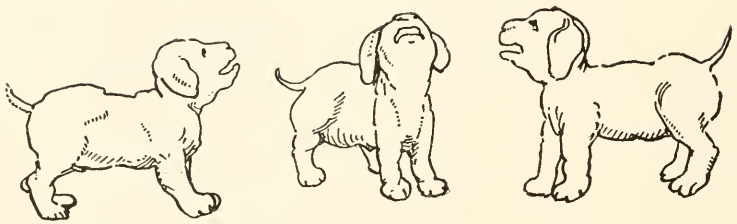


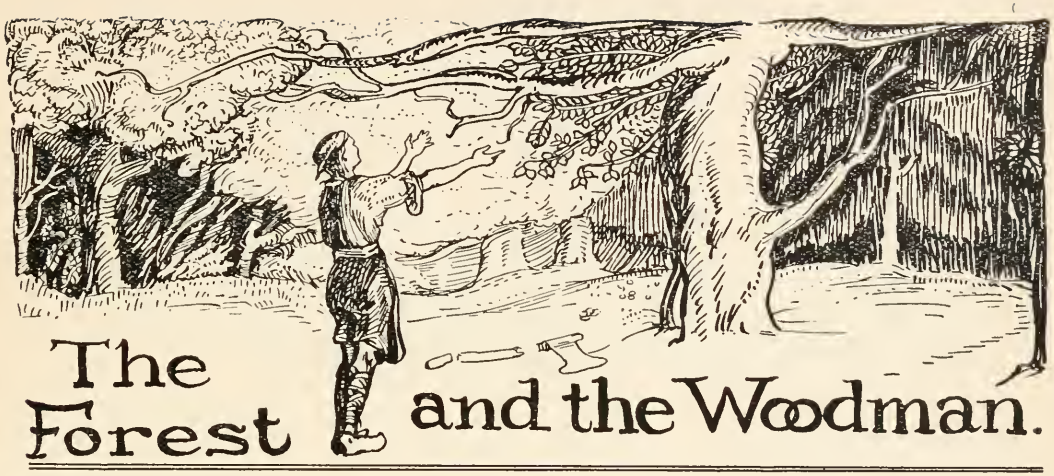
THE Wolves are never triflers when they feed.
One of these Gentry, at a great repast,
Attacked his food so fiercely that at last
He nearly fell a victim to his greed.
A bone stuck in his throat.
No sound escaped, his trouble to denote;
But, luckily for him, there passed a Stork
At no great distance.
He signs to her; she runs to his assistance.
Behold the Lady Surgeon at her work!
The bone is soon removed; he breathes; and she
Claims for the Operation some slight fee.
"A fee! You surely jest,
Good Dame," he cries, amazed at this request.
"What! Is it not enough that I have done,

In letting you escape Death's very jaws?
Away, ungrateful one,
And never come again beneath my paws!"

A LADY Hound, about to be a Mother,
And pressed for suitable accommodation,
Made interest with a Lady Friend
That she should lend
Her Kennel for a term of occupation.
All prospers; at term's end returns the other,
Of whom the Matron begs a fortnight more:
Her Little Ones, she vows, can hardly walk.
To this, after some talk,
The Friend agrees compliant as before.
Again behold the Entertainer come
To crave—with some misgiving—House and Home.
Our Dame, to all appeals,
With lifted lip her teeth half showing,

And string of Striplings snarling at her heels,
Makes answer: "As to going,
Of our Intentions you need have no doubt;
We'll go—the moment you can turn us out.'

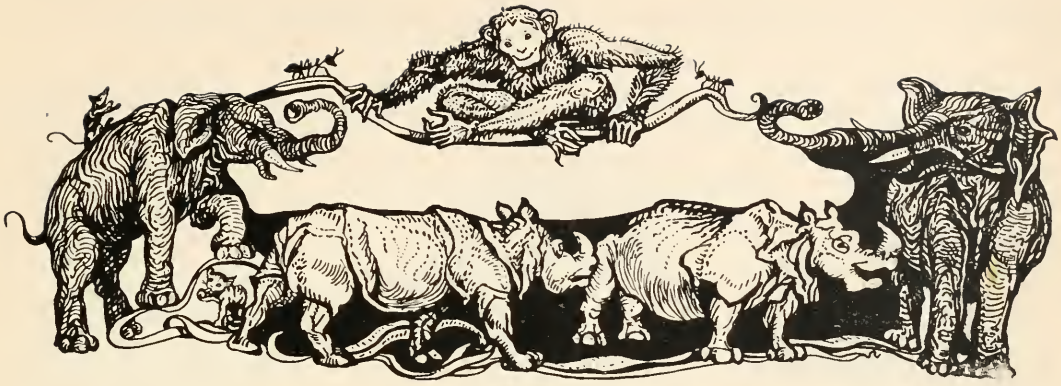




The Forest and the Woodman.

A WOODMAN felled a venerable Oak;
The handle of his Axe by chance he broke.
This damage could not be so soon repaired,
But that the Trees must for a while be spared.
He prays the Forest now,
With great humility, to let him take
From one ill-growing Tree a single bough,
Another haft to make.
Her groans and sighs no more will he neglect,
But leave uninjured many an Oak and Fir
Whose charm of antique grandeur all respect.
The innocent Forest grants, without demur,
This favour, and provides him with the wood
To mend his Axe. Soon she repents the deed.

The Wretch new armed, in quite another mood,
Resumes his daily toil,
Taking no heed
Of all his vows her beauty not to spoil.
With groans renewed, with blows the air is rent ;
The Forest's gift becomes her chastisement.



The Elephant and the Ape of Jupiter.

THE Elephant and Rhinoceros
Once on a time contended
For Sovereignty; they ended
By staking everything, for gain or loss,
On one decisive Combat in the lists.
A day for this they fixed, when news was brought
That some one had descried through cloudy mists
The Ape of Jupiter
Caduceus in hand, despatched, 'twas thought,
With Powers Terrestrial to confer.
This Ape, says History, bore the name of Gil.
The Elephant immediately concluded
That he was sent some mission to fulfil
Relating to the Contest; thus deluded
He waits on Gil, but finds him rather slow

The Ape of Jupiter caduceus in hand.

In broaching what he has to say.
Sir Gil however in a formal way
Before his Majesty bows low.
His Majesty in expectation
Regards with mute inquiry the Legation.
But not a word. The interest he believed
The Gods must take in Quarrels such as his
Had no existence in the Spheres of Bliss;
No news of the affair had been received.
What matters it to Those on high
Whether an Elephant or gilded Fly
Battles? He must himself commence the theme.
"My Cousin Jupiter," he says,
"Will see in a few days
A glorious Combat from his Throne supreme,
And all his Court
Enjoy Celestial sport."
"What Combat?" says the Ape with knitted brow.
"What Combat? How?
Know you not that the biggest of the Brutes,
Myself excepted, with myself disputes;
That Elephantopolis
Is going to war with great Rhinoceropolis—
Kingdoms, I think, not quite unknown to Fame?"
"Truly I never heard the name

Of either place that I can call to mind,"
Replies Sir Gil; "the fact is,
In Heaven 'tis not our practice
To pay much heed to matters of that kind."
Abashed and mortified
The Elephant conceals his wounded pride.
"What then," says he, "your presence here invites?"
"I come," Gil answers, "to install
Two Ants in their just rights
As to a Blade of Grass they seek to share.
Our Providence takes thought for all;
No Earthly Power can shake its even hand,
Its equal current stem;
And as to your affair,
The Gods but weigh it as a grain of sand,
For small is great and great is small with Them."